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Volume 89, No. 9 August 2010

The RING

The Ocean Flows Both Ways

Don Stradley's article, "Coming To America: Amir Khan Follows A Well-Trodden Path," not only documents Khan's U.S. debut but also explores the history of British boxers who have crossed the Atlantic Ocean in search of greater glory. But it wasn't always that way. There was a time when many American fighters traveled east in hopes of finding the success that had eluded them in the land of their birth.

By and large, the fighters journeying to the Old World have been African Americans. The British Parliament outlawed slavery in 1807, almost 60 years before the 13th Amendment was signed into law in the United States, which meant that opportunities for black fighters were virtually non-existent in the United States prior to the end of the Civil War.

Bill Richmond is generally recognized as the first black American fighter of note to make his mark in England. Born into slavery in New York, he became the valet of a British army general who took Richmond back to England.

"The Black Terror," as Richmond was known, had his first recorded fight in 1791 and his last in 1818 but is best remembered as the trainer of Tom Molineaux, another former American slave living in England. Molineaux became the first black man to fight for the heavyweight title when he challenged Tom Cribb in 1810. Had the fight been conducted in a fair manner, Molineaux, not George Dixon 80 years later, would most likely have become the first black world champion.

Even after slavery was abolished in the U.S., racism remained a fact of life, forcing many black fighters to continue sailing eastward in the hopes of bettering their lot. Celebrated black heavyweights Joe Jeannette and Sam McVey found greater appreciation for their fighting skills in Europe than in America. Missouri-born welterweight champion Aaron Lester Brown (better known as the "Dixie Kid") campaigned from 1900 until 1920, but moved to England in 1911 and never fought in the U.S. again.

But the cross-cultural exchange goes beyond bigotry and its many ramifications. Historically, there has long been a greater appreciation for many African-American artists in Europe than there is back home. Jazz musicians from Josephine Baker to Charlie Parker and Dexter Gordon, as well novelists such as Richard Baldwin and Chester Himes, were all expatriates and lived in Europe for much of their careers.

Moreover, the trend of black American boxers fighting in Great Britain and other western European countries never really went away. Today, it's mainly prompted by economics. Take Philadelphian Steve Cunningham for example. After having his career badly mishandled by Don King for eight years, the former IBF cruiserweight titleholder recently signed a contract with German promoter Sauerland Events—and why not? Cunningham earned more money in the three fights he's had in Europe (two in Poland, one in Germany) than all of his U.S. bouts combined.

At the same time, American fight fans have embraced countless fighters from around the world, none more so than Manny Pacquiao, the reigning pound-for-pound king. Sure, making it big in the United States remains the goal of fighters worldwide, and for that we are grateful. But it's never been a one-way street.

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[Opening Shot]

Going Ape

While the grumpy-looking ape appears to have gotten the better of the sad-looking Wookie in this beast vs. beast bout, both contestants were actually on the same side, hoping to help their orangutan cousins. The mock bout was staged by activists from the Indonesian Center for Orangutan Protection to protest matches between real orangutans staged at a private zoo in Thailand. The COP wants the Indonesian government to claim back the 11 boxing orangutans from Thai authorities.

PHOTO BY ADEK BERRY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

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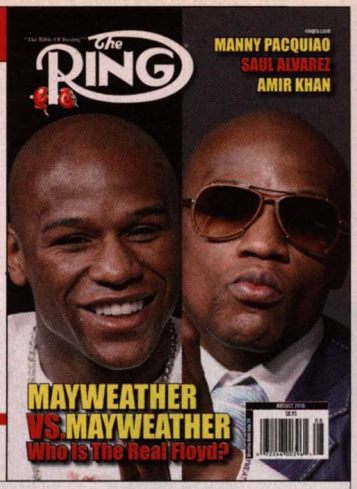

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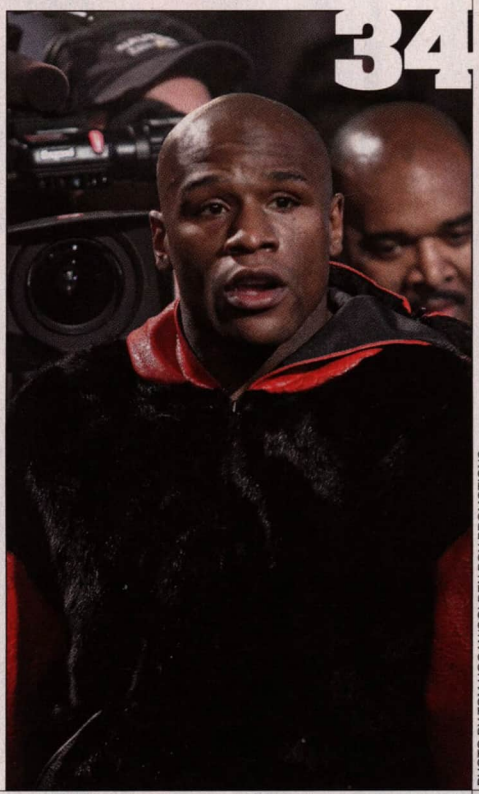

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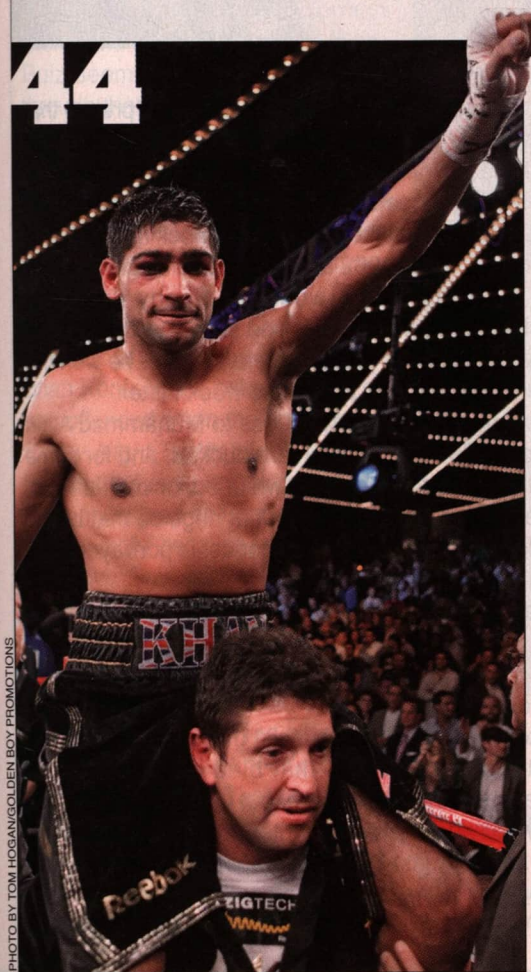

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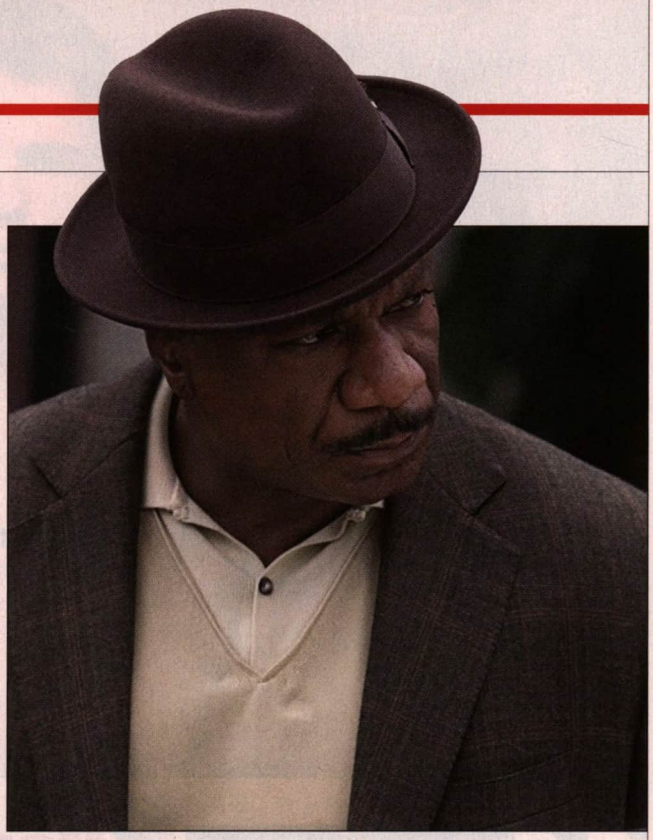
Liston Movie No Knockout

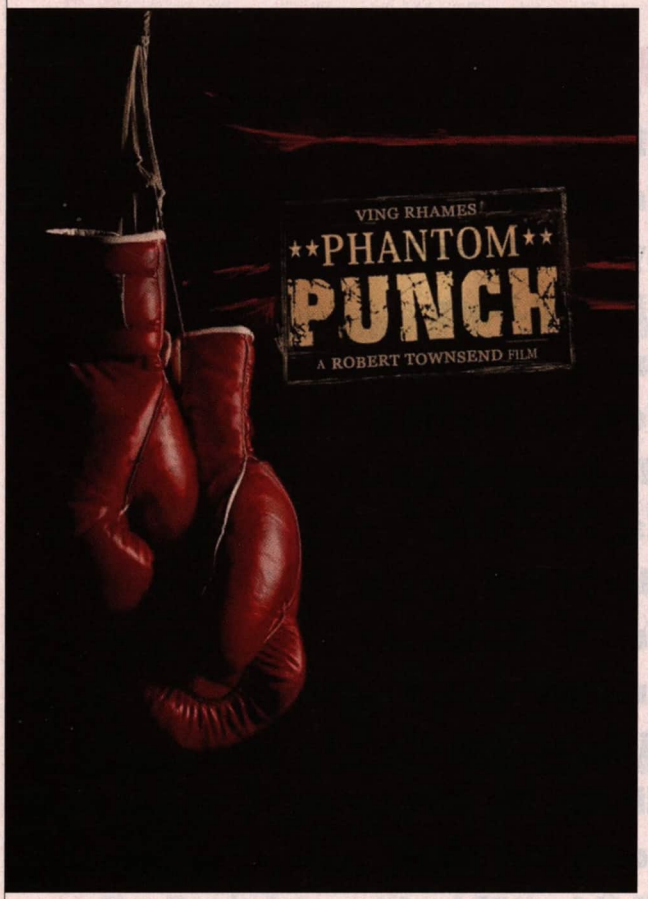
According to the motion picture *Phantom Punch*, ex-heavyweight champion Sonny Liston was killed by the mob in 1971 because he refused to start taking dives in the ring, though his murder by forced drug overdose was actually orchestrated by his weaselly manager, who never passed on to Liston the Godfather's order to go in the tank but wanted Sonny wasted as revenge for boinking Mrs. Weaselly Manager.

If that makes any sense at all to you, you will probably enjoy the film starring Ving Rhames as the glowering Liston, released by Access Motion Pictures in 2008 and now available on DVD.

Directed by Robert Townsend, *Phantom Punch* is a quasi-sympathetic depiction of Liston whose ham-handed punches hit mostly air or merely stun with their telegraphed obviousness. Rhames has the Liston menace down but is too old and paunchy for the role, and Rick Roberts as "Father Alios," a composite of the two Catholic priests who tried to tame Liston, comes across as the kind of creepy prelate that has the Vatican ducking and dodging nowadays.



Ving Rhames as Liston



Now available on DVD

Many of the scenes are downright ludicrous, such as the one in which a hopeful Liston emerges from his locker room at Chicago's Comiskey Park after knocking out Floyd Patterson for the title in 1962 and finds not a single reporter waiting to question him. A wounded Sonny drops his championship belt from THE RING and stonily trudges off. In fact, there was a raucous press conference after he won the title and THE RING belt was presented weeks later.

Questions about Liston's kayo loss to Muhammad Ali in their infamous 1965 title rematch are ducked, and for some reason Nat Fleischer, the elderly, white editor of THE RING, who was responsible for pointing out at ringside that Liston had been down for more than 10 seconds, is portrayed here as a young black guy.

On behalf of the Boxing Writers Association of America, I fervently protest the depiction of boxing journalists as simpering, sneering louts, even though I'm not a member and I've known some who are.

The Liston romanticists who insist that beneath Sonny's baleful exterior was a heart that bled for kids and the downtrodden may find solace here, but I prefer to remember the Liston who, when asked by writer Joe Flaherty what he would do if he came into $6-million, replied: "I would buy me the finest p___y in the United States of America!"

—Pete Ehrmann

Farewell To "The Quiet Man"

He was the anti-stylist, a fighter who clinched too often and seemed oblivious to the fans booing him. Still, despite his less than crowd-pleasing approach, John Ruiz accomplished much during his time as a professional fighter. His recent retirement comes after a loss to David Haye, a bout that saw Ruiz stopped for only the second time in his 18-year career.

The first Latino heavyweight titlist, Ruiz is best remembered for a three-fight series with Evander Holyfield. Ruiz lost the first bout, but beat Holyfield in the rematch, earning the WBA heavyweight belt.

Holyfield once said that Ruiz punched as hard as anyone and was difficult because of his clutching style. "I couldn't predict what he might do," said Holyfield. The rubber match ended in a draw.

Trained by the volatile Norman Stone and promoted by Don King, Ruiz seemed poised for a breakthrough that never quite happened. After losing the title to Roy Jones Jr., Ruiz ambled on to post a final record of 44-9-1 (30), including a second turn as WBA titlist, and notable wins over Hasim Rahman and Andrew Golota.

Nicknamed "The Quiet Man," Ruiz possessed a dry wit. ESPN's Brian Kenny once asked Ruiz if he was offended when the analysts on *Friday Night Fights* didn't refer to him as the heavyweight champion, focusing instead on Lennox Lewis.

"Not really, because I never watch the show," Ruiz said.

Ruiz retired briefly in 2005 after losing to James Toney. Ruiz returned when Toney failed the postfight drug test and the bout was declared a no-contest. "If they want me out of the sport, they'll have to knock me out," Ruiz said defiantly. That day finally came against Haye.

Ruiz, 38, plans to open a boxing gym in Massachusetts.

—Don Stradley

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES.

Ruiz celebrates TKO of Fres Oquendo

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
04/24/10	Jorge Arce KO 7 Cecilio Santos *Arce is just enough past his prime to make mismatches fun*	FOX Sports	b	C+	C+	B-
04/24/10	Alfredo Angulo KO 11 Joel Julio *The stronger mirror image wins*	HBO	jm	B+	B+	B
04/24/10	Tomasz Adamek W 12 Chris Arreola *Adamek is shaping into a legitimate force at heavyweight*	HBO	h	A-	A-	B+
04/24/10	Mikkel Kessler W 12 Carl Froch *It's no secret that close fights go to the hometown guy*	Showtime	sm	A	A	B+
04/30/10	Marcus Johnson W 10 Derek Edwards *It's not a good sign for a prospect when seats empty as he fights*	Showtime	sm	C+	C	C
04/30/10	Robert Guerrero KO 8 Roberto Arrieta *Great to see Telefutura and Guerrero return to boxing*	Telefutura	l	A-	C+	C+
05/01/10	Daniel Ponce De Leon W 10 Cornelius Lock *Ponce De Leon must have found the mythical Fountain of Jab*	PPV	f	B	B-	C+
05/01/10	Saul Alvarez KO 9 Jose Cotto *Alvarez looks as Mexican as Salma Hayek does Swedish*	PPV	w	B+	C+	B-
05/01/10	Floyd Mayweather W 12 Shane Mosley *We've seen Wiley Coyote enjoy more success than Mosley*	PPV	w	A+	A	C+
05/07/10	Danny Garcia KO 7 Christopher Fernandez *Hernandez brought bravery; Garcia brought everything else*	Telefutura	jw	B	C	C+
05/07/10	Seth Mitchell KO 2 Johnnie White *Former college linebacker still chasing down opponents*	ESPN2	h	C+	C	C+
05/08/10	Urbano Antillon W 10 Rene Gonzalez *Antillon scores two knockdowns en route to title shot*	PPV	l	B	C+	C
05/08/10	Jorge Solis W 12 Mario Santiago *Interim titleholder was intermittently entertaining*	PPV	jl	B+	B-	C
05/08/10	Antonio Margarito W 10 Roberto Garcia *Margarito wins; boxing loses*	PPV	jm	B	C	C
05/08/10	Paul Williams Tech W 4 Kermit Cintron *Now that was a dive!*	HBO	jm	B+	A-	F
05/14/10	Jesus Ruiz W 12 Cuauhtemoc Vargas *Spell Check applauds Cuauhtemoc's loss*	Telemundo	jf	B-	C+	B
5/14/10	Julio Diaz W 10 Herman Ngoudjo *Good win for Diaz, who remains one loss away from gatekeeper status*	ESPN2	jw	B	B+	C+
5/14/10	Sergiy Dzinziruk KO 10 Daniel Dawson *Dzinziruk has been out of the ring for 18 months, but his jab looks like it never left*	Showtime	jm	B+	B	B-
5/15/10	Humberto Soto W 12 Ricardo Dominguez *Soto celebrates 30th b'day but can't blow out Dominguez*	FOX Sports	l	A-	B-	C+
5/15/10	Victor Ortiz W 10 Nate Campbell *HBO announcing team makes it through show without using term "gunshy"*	HBO	jw	B	B+	C
5/15/10	Amir Khan KO 11 Paul Malignaggi *English gentleman schools cocky American*	HBO	jw	B	B-	B-
5/21/10	Ruslan Provodnikov KO 9 Emanuel Augustus *Has Augustus ever had a fight on ESPN on more than a week's notice?*	ESPN2	jw	C+	B-	C+
5/21/10	Ji Hoon Kim KO 1 Ameth Diaz *Diaz outlands Kim 10-to-1, but Kim's one was all it took*	ESPN2	l	B	C+	C+
5/22/10	Yonnhy Perez D 12 Abner Mares *Both men elevated by intensely fought draw*	Showtime	b	A-	A-	A-
5/22/10	Rafael Marquez KO 3 Israel Vazquez *The cut to Vazquez' left eye would make a butcher puke*	Showtime	f	A-	A-	C

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Boxing Bookshelf

Giambra in his prime

People in boxing circles have known about Joey Giambra's book for years. When he was working as a Las Vegas cabbie during the 1980s, he kept copies in the cab, selling them to tourists. The book wasn't marketed professionally, but Giambra was a tireless self-promoter and did his best to "get it out there." Giambra wanted his story told. It was a good one, he felt, filled with women and mobsters and little nuggets of Hollywood lore that he picked up while working as a bit player in TV and movies.

The Uncrowned Champion, Boxing and the Mafia in the Golden Era (AuthorHouse, paperback, 307 pages, $18.00) has been published again, with additional material. Fortunately for Giambra, he no longer has to sell the book like a door-to-door salesman hawking encyclopedias. Now he hits the Internet sites, talking about the book he believes will change the way people look at boxing.

Giambra was a fine 1950s middleweight, winning 65 of 77 bouts. He fought more than 30 times on television, where he met the likes of Joey Giardello and Tiger Jones. He was quick and he could punch a little, and he had the kind of movie star looks that made him an attraction in those days. But since he wasn't willing to align himself with the underworld figures who manipulated boxing, he never received a title shot. And that, more or less, is the gist of the story.

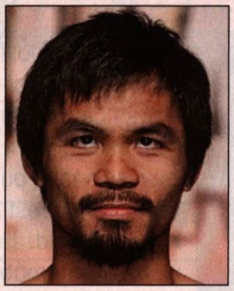
For those expecting a tell-all expose of boxing corruption, there's not much here that hasn't been printed before. We know the mob controlled things and we know a lot of good fighters went without title shots. If Giambra's book came out in 1963, the news would be compelling, but not in 2010. And like many books written by ex-pugs, there aren't many pages devoted to boxing, which is a disappointment. Instead, there's an awful lot about Giambra's personal life, such as his army days and his friendships. And buyers beware: Large chunks of the book are devoted to Giambra's love life. Maybe Giambra thought his flings were hot stuff, but the turgid dialog in these scenes feel lifted from a cheesy daytime drama.

The book ends with a "somebody up there likes me" flourish, as Giambra survives a car accident and embarks on his acting career. Unfortunately, the story stops in 1968, so we never learn what happened to Giambra's Hollywood dreams or how the wolves of tinsel town compared to the third-rate hoods of the boxing world.

The Uncrowned Champion feels rather slight for a title marketed as "a piece of American history," but fans of the era may enjoy the book. Oddly enough, a press release announced that the book's original printing sold 100,000 copies. If that's not an exaggeration, it means that everyone who may have wanted *The Uncrowned Champion* already has it.

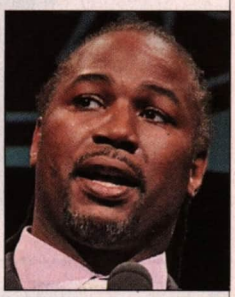
—Don Stradley

Outside the Ropes



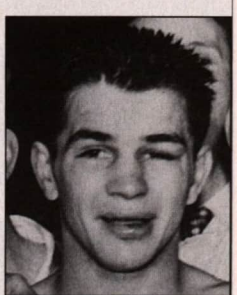
Pacquaio: Can't slow down

Your monthly peek into the hyperactive world of **Manny Pacquiao**: Judge **Larry R. Hicks** of the U.S. District Court of Nevada denied two motions filed by **Oscar De La Hoya** and **Richard Schaefer**, who were attempting to have Pacquiao's defamation suit dismissed. Judge Hicks also granted permission for Pacquiao's lawyers to take depositions from De La Hoya and Schaefer. Meanwhile, newly elected Congressman Pacquiao said he would vie for the chairmanship of the committee on energy at the Philippines House of Representatives in order to help resolve the power crisis on Mindanao. The island is suffering from daily brownouts of up to 12 hours. Apparently, despite his new duties as a congressman, Pacquiao still has time to indulge in his passion for cockfighting. THE RING's pound-for-pound king has entered the World Championship Derby and vowed to win what many consider the most prestigious trophy in the cockfighting world. Finally, on May 24, the Filipino icon was taken to Cardinal Santos Medical Center suffering from stomach pains. Pacquiao was diagnosed with acid reflux in 2006, which apparently flared up due to the stress from his recent political campaign, combined with irregular eating habits. Attending physician **Dr. Gina Bagsic** said it was not a serious condition. Then, as if to prove that he actually is superhuman, the same day he was released from the hospital, Pacquiao was reportedly in the studio filming his soon-to-be-released sitcom, *Show Me The Manny* ... Former world middleweight champion **Kelly Pavlik** declined his contractual option for an immediate rematch with **Sergio Martinez**, who took the title from him on April 17. Manager **Cameron Dunkin** said that Pavlik would probably move up in weight and campaign at either super middleweight or light heavyweight when his career resumes ... Criminal charges against Canadian Olympic silver medalist **Shawn O'Sullivan**, 48, have been withdrawn by Hasting County attorney **Jodi White** at a pre-trial hearing. O'Sullivan was arrested by Belleville, Ontario, police in November 2009 on the property of **Jeff Burton** while pursuing a lead about 10 championship and personal rings that had been stolen from him in 2007. O'Sullivan fought professionally from 1984 to 1997, compiling a 23-5 (16) overall record ...



Lewis: Axed by HBO

HBO has declined to renew its contract with former heavyweight champion **Lennox Lewis**, who had been working as part of HBO's *Boxing After Dark* broadcast team since 2006. HBO Sports president **Ross Greenburg** said that the show would continue with just a two-man announcing team, and HBO spokesman **Kevin Flaherty** said there were no plans to replace Lewis. It is, however, an open secret that HBO has been auditioning possible replacements, including trainers **Freddie Roach** and **Naazim Richardson**. Lewis told ESPN.com that he would have stayed with HBO if the opportunity had been offered to him ... Former WBO and British Commonwealth welterweight titleholder **Eamonn Loughran** is being sued for punching Northern Ireland businessman **Kevin O'Kane**, who is at the center of an alleged fraud. Loughran, who compiled a 26-2-1 (13) record during a nine-year pro career that ended in 1996, lost tens of thousands of pounds in an alleged scam that saw dozens of people receiving fake deeds for holiday apartments in Turkey ... Police in Broomal, Pennsylvania, removed promoter **Damon Feldman** from his home in mid-May after Feldman sent an email to an unknown number of people suggesting he would commit suicide. Feldman had recently been charged with fixing fights and staging them without a license. Several days after Feldman underwent court-ordered psychiatric evaluation, the state Attorney General's Office socked him with five new felony charges, including bribery, theft, and fraud ... Albuquerque, New Mexico, lightweight prospect **Archie Ray Marquez**, 21, was arrested on domestic violence charges after police were called to the boxer's home. Marquez, 10-0 (7), is accused of punching his wife and trying to prevent her from calling 911 ... Former British and British Empire featherweight titleholder **Billy "Spider" Kelly**, 78, died in early-May in his native Derry, Northern Ireland. Kelly made history in 1954 when he emulated his father, **Jimmy "Spider" Kelly,** by winning the British Empire 126-pound title at Belfast's King's Hall. Kelly, 56-24-4 (15), turned pro in 1950, won the Empire title in 1954 and the British title the following year. Kelly's controversial points loss to **Charlie Hill** in 1956 led to a riot at King's Hall. Kelly retired in March '62 following an eight-round draw with **Jim "Spike" McCormack**.



Kelly: Dies at age 78

Quotable

"I wanna tie u up on the bed N torture u"

—One of the sexually explicit text messages 21-year-old model Leanne Crow claims she allegedly received from WBA junior welterweight titleholder Amir Khan

"The fight against me will be much shorter than against Wladimir because Wladimir will beat him badly all 12 rounds and then knock him out. I will give him a much easier proposal. I'll knock him out in three, maximum four rounds!"

—Vitali Klitschko, explaining the difference in what David Haye would experience fighting him and his brother, Wladimir

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended May 23, 2010

Heavyweights: Ruslan Chagaev (sixth last issue) switches places with Eddie Chambers (fifth last issue) after scoring a 12-round decision over Kali Meehan.

Cruiserweights: Marco Huck (fourth last issue) moves to three, trading spots with Zsolt Erdei (third last issue). Giacobbe Fragomeni (fifth last issue) falls to eight after being knocked out by number-two contender Krzysztof Wlodarczyk. Fragomeni's downgrade allows everyone rated six through eight to advance one spot each.

Light Heavyweights: Antonio Tarver (fifth last issue) departs because he has not fought in more than a year and has no bout scheduled. Tarver's exit enables everyone rated six and below to advance one spot each and allows Chris Henry to return at 10.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: David Lopez (eighth last issue) exits because of inactivity. Lopez' departure allows Daniel Geale (ninth last issue) and Sebastian Zbik (10th last issue) to move up one place each, making room for Roman Karmazin to re-enter at 10.

Junior Middleweights: Sergiy Dzinziruk, who exited due to inactivity, returns to action and replaces Deandre Latimore at nine. Cory Spinks (second last issue) departs due to inactivity, moving everyone from three to nine up one rung and allowing Saul Alvarez to debut at 10.

Welterweights: No changes.

Junior Welterweights: Ricky Hatton (fifth last issue) exits due to inactivity and Paul Malignaggi (sixth last issue) slips to eight due to a loss to Amir Khan. The reshuffling allows everyone rated six to nine to leap two places each and Mike Alvarado (10th last issue) to move up to nine. Lamont Peterson comes in at 10.

Lightweights: Kevin Mitchell (ninth last issue) leaves after being stopped by number-one contender Michael Katsidis. Mitchell's exit pushes up John Murray (10th last issue) to nine and makes room for Robert Guerrero to debut at 10.

Junior Lightweights: Robert Guerrero (first last issue) has moved to lightweight. Everybody rated from two to seven advances one spot each and Jorge Solis (ninth last issue) jumps two places to seven and Vitali Tajbert (10th last issue) moves to nine. Argenis Mendez debuts at 10.

Featherweights: Previously unrated Orlando Salido catapults to three following his decision over Cristobal Cruz (third last issue), who slips to four and moves everyone four to seven down one slot each. Rafael Marquez debuts at 10 following his TKO of Israel Vazquez. Due to the addition of Marquez and Salido, Mario Santiago (ninth last issue) and Celestino Caballero (10th last issue) both depart. It should be noted that Caballero remains 10 in THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings, although loses his featherweight standing since he has only fought once at 126 pounds.

Junior Featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: Wholesale changes: Fernando Montiel (ninth last issue) jumps to one following his TKO of Hozumi Hasegawa (first last issue), who falls to three. Wladimir Sidorenko (third last issue) exits due to inactivity. With Montiel moving up and Sidorenko's departing, Sasha Bakhtin (10th last issue) advances to nine, allowing Eric Morel to enter at 10. Abner Mares (eighth last issue) jumps to five following his draw with Yonnhy Perez, who remains at four. Mares' advancement forces down everyone five through seven one position each.

Junior Bantamweights: Hugo Cazares (fourth last issue) trades places with Nobuo Nashiro (second last issue) after beating Nashiro. Flyweight Omar Narvaez moves up and enters at 10, forcing Jorge Arce (10th last issue) out of the ratings.

Flyweights: Narvaez (fifth last issue) is now campaigning as a junior bantam. His departure allows everyone rated six and below to climb one rung each and makes room for Richie Mepranum to debut at 10.

Junior Flyweights: No changes.

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-For-Pound: Significant shakeup: Bernard Hopkins (sixth last issue) and Miguel Cotto (seventh last issue) exit, while Shane Mosley (third last issue) drops to five. The changes enable Juan Manuel Marquez (fourth last issue) and Nonito Donaire (fifth last issue) to each rise one place. The realignment also allows Chad Dawson (eighth last issue) and Paul Williams (ninth last issue) to each climb up two rungs. Sergio Martinez and Pongsaklek Wonjongkam debut at eight and nine, respectively.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Welter/Welterweight
2. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
3. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
4. **Nonito Donaire**
   Junior Bantamweight
5. **Shane Mosley**
   Welterweight
6. **Chad Dawson**
   Light Heavyweight
7. **Paul Williams**
   Middleweight
8. **Sergio Martinez**
   Junior Middle/Middleweight
9. **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**
   Flyweight
10. **Celestino Caballero**
    Featherweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **ringtv.com**

[The Ring Ratings]

For Period Ended May 23, 2010

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Abner Mares jumps to fifth at bantamweight after a draw with Yonnhy Perez

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 54-3 (48)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 39-2 (37)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 24-1 (22)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 19-0 (14)
4. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 41-1 (27)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-2 (18)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 29-1 (19)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 28-2 (25)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina 45-2-2 (24)
2. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
3. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico 18-1 (15)
4. **RYAN RHODES**
England 44-4 (30)
5. **SECHEW POWELL**
Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
6. **YURI FOREMAN**
Belarus 28-0 (8)
7. **JOACHIM ALCINE**
Canada 32-1 (19)
8. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
Armenia 27-0 (17)
9. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine 37-0 (23)
10. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
Mexico 32-0-1 (24)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 43-0-2 (22)
2. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 28-0 (25)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico 34-10-2 (22)
4. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
5. **STEVEN LUEVANO**
La Puente, CA 37-2-1 (15)
6. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
Philippines 30-2-1 (17)
7. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba 18-0 (15)
8. **ELIO ROJAS**
Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
9. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico 39-2 (32)
10. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 39-5 (35)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand 41-1 (29)
2. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 36-4-3 (23)
3. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada 32-1 (12)
4. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 37-2-2 (23)
5. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
South Africa 23-2-2 (13)
6. **RENDALL MUNROE**
England 21-1 (9)
7. **SATOSHI HOSONO**
Japan 16-1 (12)
8. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
Puerto Rico 18-0-1 (15)
9. **KOHEI OBA**
Japan 27-0-1 (11)
10. **MASAAKI SERIE**
Japan 15-4 (6)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 41-3-1 (31)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama 29-1-1 (10)
3. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 28-3 (12)
4. **YONNHY PEREZ**
Colombia 20-0-1 (14)
5. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico 20-0-1 (13)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana 27-2 (22)
7. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
Venezuela 19-1 (11)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 22-3 (18)
9. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
Russia 24-0 (11)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
Madison, WI 42-2 (21)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
   Philadelphia, PA 22-2 (11)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
   Poland 42-2-1 (32)
3. **MARCO HUCK**
   Yugoslavia 29-1 (22)
4. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 31-0 (17)
5. **TROY ROSS**
   Canada 23-1 (16)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 29-3 (26)
7. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
   Russia 19-0 (14)
8. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
   Italy 26-3-1 (10)
9. **OLA AFOLABI**
   England 14-2-3 (6)
10. **MATT GODFREY**
    Providence, RI 20-1 (10)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHAD DAWSON**
   New Haven, CT 29-0 (17)
2. **GLEN JOHNSON**
   Jamaica 50-13-2 (34)
3. **JEAN PASCAL**
   Haiti 25-1 (16)
4. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 51-5-1 (32)
5. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
   Tallahassee, FL 20-0 (18)
6. **VYACHESLAV UZELKOV**
   Ukraine 22-0 (14)
7. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
   Romania 26-2 (15)
8. **KARO MURAT**
   Iraq 21-0 (13)
9. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
   Wales 19-0 (9)
10. **CHRIS HENRY**
    Houston, TX 25-2 (20)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **LUCIAN BUTE**
   Romania 26-0 (21)
2. **ANDRE WARD**
   Oakland, CA 21-0 (13)
3. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
   Denmark 43-2 (32)
4. **CARL FROCH**
   England 26-1 (21)
5. **SAKIO BIKA**
   Cameroon 28-3-2 (19)
6. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
   Flint, MI 19-1 (13)
7. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
   Armenia 31-1 (25)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
   Tulsa, OK 29-1 (20)
9. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
   Germany 38-2 (23)
10. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
    Mexico 28-3 (21)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina 45-2-2 (24)

1. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 33-2-1 (14)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
   Augusta, GA 39-1 (27)
3. **KELLY PAVLIK**
   Youngstown, OH 36-2 (32)
4. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
   Germany 33-3 (16)
5. **KHOREN GEVOR**
   Armenia 31-4 (16)
6. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
   England 26-2 (18)
7. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 38-3 (23)
8. **DANIEL GEALE**
   Australia 22-1 (13)
9. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
   Germany 29-0 (10)
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN**
    Russia 40-3-1 (45)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 51-3-2 (38)
3. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 26-0 (20)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-6 (39)
5. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 34-2 (27)
6. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
   Ghana 35-4 (20)
7. **LUIS COLLAZO**
   Queens, NY 30-4 (15)
8. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 36-8-1 (18)
9. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 29-1 (17)
10. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
    Ukraine 30-0 (20)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 51-3-2 (38)

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 25-0 (11)
2. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 20-0 (13)
3. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 23-1 (17)
4. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 28-1 (27)
5. **JUAN URANGO**
   Colombia 22-3-1 (17)
6. **KAIZER MABUZA**
   South Africa 23-6-3 (14)
7. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-3-1 (13)
8. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
   Brooklyn, NY 27-4 (5)
9. **MIKE ALVARADO**
   Denver, CO 27-0 (19)
10. **LAMONT PETERSON**
    Washington, D.C. 28-1 (14)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 50-5-1 (37)

1. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 27-2 (22)
2. **ALI FUNEKA**
   South Africa 30-3-3 (25)
3. **ROLANDO REYES**
   Mexico 31-4-2 (20)
4. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 25-3 (12)
5. **ANTHONY PETERSON**
   Washington, DC 30-0 (19)
6. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 25-0 (17)
7. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 26-9-2 (20)
8. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 52-7-2 (32)
9. **JOHN MURRAY**
   England 29-0 (17)
10. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
    Gilroy, CA 26-1-1 (18)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 29-4 (12)
2. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 23-0-1 (14)
3. **MALCOLM KLASSEN**
   South Africa 24-5-2 (15)
4. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 37-4-1 (19)
5. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 15-0 (12)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 21-1-1 (15)
7. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 39-2-2 (28)
8. **JORGE LINARES**
   Venezuela 28-1 (18)
9. **VITALI TAJBERT**
   Kazakhstan 20-1 (6)
10. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
    Dominican Republic 16-1 (9)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 35-2-1 (27)
2. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 31-6-2 (22)
3. **SIMPHIWE NONGQAYI**
   South Africa 16-0-1 (6)
4. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 13-2-1 (8)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 34-3 (27)
6. **KOHEI KONO**
   Japan 25-4 (9)
7. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 23-1 (15)
8. **DAIGO NAKAHIRO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (8)
9. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
   Philippines 19-0-1 (15)
10. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
    Argentina 32-0-2 (19)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 75-3-1 (39)

1. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 22-1 (14)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
   Japan 36-3-3 (23)
3. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 16-2 (11)
4. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 49-2-1 (20)
5. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-5-2 (17)
6. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 20-1 (15)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 25-2 (16)
8. **ZOLANI TETE**
   South Africa 12-0 (11)
9. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico 18-0 (14)
10. **RICHIE MEPRANUM**
    Philippines 22-2-1 (5)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 33-0-1 (6)

1. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
   Mexico 24-1-1 (20)
2. **RODEL MAYOL**
   Philippines 26-4-2 (20)
3. **CARLOS TAMARA**
   Colombia 21-4 (15)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico 37-6 (21)
5. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 26-3 (15)
6. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 30-2-2 (21)
7. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina 23-1 (13)
8. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
   Philippines 14-0 (8)
9. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 28-3-2 (11)
10. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
    South Africa 14-0 (5)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua 25-0 (21)
2. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 34-0 (12)
3. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 27-1-1 (16)
5. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 26-1-3 (15)
6. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
7. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 26-3 (21)
8. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 62-8-5 (31)
9. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 23-4 (9)
10. **YASUTAKA KUROKI**
    Japan 23-4-1 (15)

By Jeff Ryan

Flawless, If In Just One Way

The myopia of the sports fan was never more evident to me then on one winter evening way back in 1983, when my radio was tuned to *Sportstalk*, host Art Rust Jr.'s immensely popular show on WABC in New York. Junior middleweight sensation Tony Ayala Jr. had just been charged with sexual assault in New Jersey, a crime that would eventually send him to prison for 16 years, and that was the only topic anyone wanted to discuss. So many callers to the show put in their two cents that the station probably needed a wheelbarrow to haul away all the pennies at the end of the broadcast.

Caller after caller felt compelled to dial up the show, spar with the call screener, and sit on hold for what always seems like an eternity whenever the phone lines of a call-in show are filled. All for the chance (not to express rage at Ayala's behavior or offer sympathy or concern for the victim, but) to wonder aloud how the arrest would affect "El Torito's" career, and if it meant he wouldn't be squaring off with Roberto Duran, as rumored, or getting a title shot in the near future. It was not one of radio's finest hours.

That story is worth telling because Edwin Valero leads off my column this month, and, at the risk of sounding like those dolts on the radio, I've decided not to focus on the tragic part of his story. Valero murdered his wife and then killed himself, and it's tough to imagine a more senseless one-two punch. One could fill page after page with thoughts on what it all means and how it all happened. But instead, I'm going to take the selfish path and write about how it affects me. In other words, why I'll miss *Valero the fighter*.

Valero was undeniably a colorful character

PHOTO BY OMAR TORRES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Valero rips into DeMarco in what proved to be the Venezuelan's final fight

PHOTO BY OMAR TORRES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

There's no mystery about why I liked the Venezuelan. Kayo artists are always my favorites, but Valero was the best closer this side of Mariano Rivera. Twenty-seven bouts, 27 wins, 27 knockouts, with his first 18 outings ending in the first round. Valero was Earnie Shavers Lite or John "The Beast" Mugabi without the build. He was as entertaining a warrior as existed in the sport at the time of his death. That his MRI turned up abnormal three years after his 2001 motorcycle

PHOTO BY MIGUEL GUTIERREZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Relatives carry Valero's coffin to his burial in El Vigia, Venezuela

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from Mickey Dismantle to the "Say Haye Kid":

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Cintron claims he wanted to fight on, but they wouldn't let him

• Tyson appeared so mellow while kibitzing with the ladies on *The View* that I wouldn't be surprised if they all started a weekly book club in Joy Behar's living room.

• In this era of club seats and endless amenities at ballparks and arenas, fans at the Paul Williams-Kermit Cintron bout must have thought promoters came up with a new way to cater to the ringside crowd. We've heard of cocktails and even gourmet food being delivered right to the rich man's seat, but never one of the combatants.

• Regardless of what California rules state, awarding Williams a victory after Cintron sailed through the ropes like Triple-H at WrestleMania, is just plain dumb, especially when you consider that Cintron wanted to continue but wasn't allowed.

• Tuning in to the NHL playoffs, I was surprised to discover that the home of the Detroit Red Wings is still called Joe Louis Arena after all these years and hasn't been renamed for some corporate sponsor. Maybe the organization fears that a name change will result in "The Brown Bomber's" ghost haunting the joint and preventing the Red Wings' goons from ever winning another fight.

• The editors at *GQ* ought to stick to what they know best, like which necktie looks best with a charcoal suit. The magazine recently dubbed Pacquiao "the greatest boxer since Ali." Apparently, Sugar Ray Leonard was just a figment of our imagination.

• Three cheers for Khan putting an end to Paulie Malignaggi's relevance. Malignaggi's problem is that he always spoke like a guy whose punch could demolish buildings, but hit like a guy who couldn't dent a sand castle. His last big fight should remain his last big fight.

• HBO's *Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel* was truly compelling with its installment dedicated to the tragic deaths last year of Alexis Arguello, Arturo Gatti, and Vernon Forrest. Photos of Arguello in a casket and Gatti sprawled in a pool of blood, and surveillance tape of Forrest chasing his eventual killer were very tough to look at, but conveyed the horrors in a way no print article ever could.

• HBO turned out another fine documentary in May, *Broad Street Bullies*, the story of the Philadelphia Flyers. Maybe one day the cable giant can produce *Broad Street Bullies II*, chronicling Matthew Saad Muhammad, Bennie Briscoe, Richie Kates, Cyclone Hart, and the other Spectrum badasses who made Dave "The Hammer" Schultz look like a Girl Scout.

• ESPN Classic recently replayed a 1984 baseball game between the Cardinals and Cubs that had originally aired on NBC. During the telecast, play-by-play announcer Bob Costas told the audience to stay tuned immediately following the game for the Eusebio Pedroza-Gerald Hayes fight from Panama. Yep, a future Hall of Famer was featured on network TV on a Saturday afternoon. Don't you miss those days?

• And if it's true that David Haye has actually retired John Ruiz, the Briton ought to be given the Nobel War Prize or something. If Haye and I ever turn up in the same pub, he won't have to pay for his Pimm's, you can be sure of that.

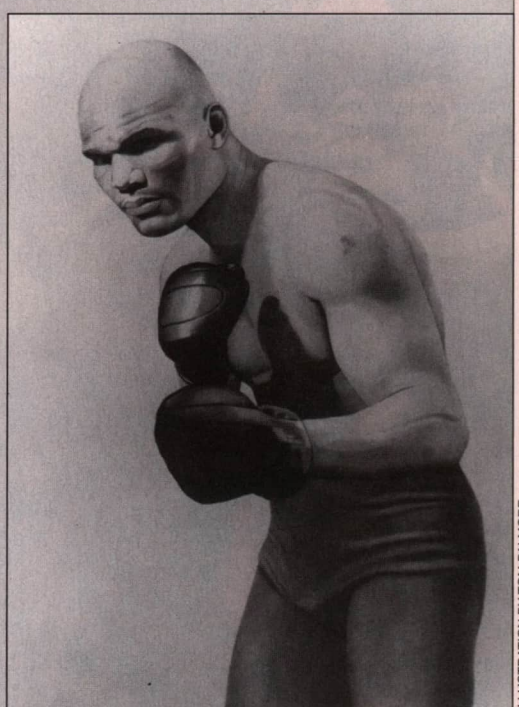


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PALMORE

Briscoe: A real Broad Street bully

accident, and he was only licensed to fight once in the U.S., only added to the intrigue that surrounded him. Did he have a higher threshold for pain? Did he, in some sense, feel like he was on borrowed time?

Valero looked pretty strange and that, too, created an aura about him. He was covered with tattoos, he flashed a grin that revealed a mouthpiece decorated in the colors of the Venezuelan flag, and his hair took on a Keith Richards quality during

the heat of battle. (No, that is most surely not a compliment.) The southpaw was reckless and sloppy. He was decked en route to stopping Vincente Mosquera in '06, but he carried a cockiness that let the opponent know that no matter what kind of momentary crisis he faced, his punching power and killer instinct were going to give him an escape route.

It's fitting that Valero's last battle, a mandatory defense of his WBC lightweight belt against Antonio DeMarco, epitomized what was so appealing about the champion. Valero took plenty of shots early, had his eye puffed up and his nose bloodied, and then caught an elbow that opened a nasty, gushing cut on his forehead. He looked to be in trouble, then stepped up the attack and forced a battered DeMarco to retire. Door slammed again.

So, from a boxing standpoint, what did the ugly end of Valero's life rob from us? It's hard to say for sure, but the worst-case scenario says it took away an eventual shootout with Manny Pacquiao or Floyd Mayweather. Perhaps the Venezuelan was headed toward Juan Manuel Marquez, Timothy Bradley, or Amir Khan. At the very least, Valero would have gotten into more exciting, bloody wars we'd remember for a long time, because a fighter like him, whose only method of avoiding punches was to render his opponent too woozy to see Valero's exposed chin in front of him, was destined to bust up as his stock kept climbing up.

Edwin Valero, dead at 28. His career dead at 27-0 (27). Like many a punch that took out a rival stupid enough to trade with him, no one could see it coming.

Psycho Analysis?: Mike Tyson turned up as a guest on the ABC morning show, *The View*, in May, and informed the menopausal windbags who host the program that his finances are not exactly what you'd call Bill Gates-like these days. In other words, Tyson's financial footing is about as solid as *his* footing was after Buster Douglas landed that final combination in Tokyo.

"I'm totally destitute and broke," was how he put it.

Now, before we start a Leg-Iron Mike Comeback Pool in anticipation of him dusting off the mouthpiece and protective cup (for the record, I would bet on, oh, let's say June 2011 and a—*gulp!*—third meeting with Evander Holyfield), let me point out that there's a much better way for the former zillionaire to regain his monetary mojo. Tyson should fax his resume right over to HBO Sports and apply for the opening that has been created on the *Boxing After Dark* broadcast team following the departure of Lennox Lewis. This isn't the first time I've lobbied for Tyson to get a permanent seat behind a microphone, but, this time, there's an actual job opening for him.

Tyson would be a good choice. He's a former undisputed heavyweight champion, a student of the game, a historian who has viewed hundreds of hours of old fight film in his life, and an opinionated character whose brain lacks the politically correct filter that, regrettably, is a requirement for all television personalities these days. On those few occasions that Tyson has worked as an analyst in the past, he's been interesting and unpredictable. While it's doubtful that any viewer would tune in primarily to hear him say something controversial or self-destructive, the possibility of him doing so at any moment would surely be a selling point.

Tyson and HBO have a shaky history, and "Kid Dynamite's" jump from HBO to Showtime during his ring career didn't endear him to HBO Sports boss Ross Greenburg. But anything that could boost ratings makes sense, and the HBO suits know that. Here's hoping they give Mike the mic, tell Bob Papa and Max Kellerman to give him room to breathe, and create telecasts that can still be entertaining even when the bout isn't.

By the way, even though I'm usually pressed for space, this column will next month take a special look back at some of the memorable witticisms and insight provided by Lewis throughout his HBO broadcasting career.

Hopefully, I can spare the two sentences. ■

Tyson looked right at home during his appearance on The View

PHOTO BY STEVE FENN/ABC VIA GETTY

By Ivan Goldman

Cintron Shafted By Crazy California Rule

As a California resident, a lifelong consumer of California oranges, and an attendee sitting across the ring when Kermit Cintron sailed through the ropes, I feel qualified to point out why the bizarre California rule that handed a victory to Paul Williams deserves to be respected. Because, well . . . actually I can't think of a single reason.

Anywhere else it would have been a technical draw, which is fair. Even if the ruling made sense, which it doesn't, you had one score of 40-36 Williams and another of 40-36 Cintron, so clearly at least one judge was off his rocker, which removes any semblance of professionalism from the clown decision that followed Cintron's crash landing.

Just for laughs, minutes after the aeronautical mishap I asked Williams' promoter Dan Goossen when's the rematch. He switched into blarney mode, having seen nothing in the ring that led him to believe a rematch was called for, blah, blah, blah. It's amazing how quickly handlers can do these calculations in their head. In this case, California-based Goossen assessed that his guy, though favored, had been unable to fight his fight against a dangerous opponent who looked like he might pull off an upset, so be thankful for an undeserved double-u and never, under any circumstances, let Williams in the ring with Cintron again.

Before questioning Goossen, I'd spoken with Ronnie Shields, Cintron's trainer, a man who's been around the block

Maybe this is why Goossen doesn't want a rematch

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

End of a bad night for Cintron

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

a couple of times. He told me, "Williams won't fight us again. I guarantee you." Of course he didn't mean Williams personally. He meant the number crunchers who plot his career. And boy, did Shields have their number.

Despite Goossen's muddled assurances to the contrary, there hasn't been such a need for a rematch since Mills Lane accidentally shoved Bernard Hopkins out of the ring into a similar crash landing in 1998 (In the rematch, you may recall, Hopkins stopped Robert Allen in the seventh).

In the three rounds and 35 seconds that the fight lasted, Cintron had taken Williams out of his comfort zone enough to prevent him from throwing his usual 100 punches per round. This one started slow, but was heating up just when it ended because of a fluke accident that the commission made worse by finding a goofy paragraph buried inside its spider web of a rulebook. I had Cintron ahead, but who knows how it would have come out? Nobody. This was an important match that cried out for a righteous conclusion.

Both fighters were brave to take this fight and are brave enough to take it again. They're sentimental favorites of mine because of their mutual ties to master of plaster Antonio Margarito. The Tijuana weasel twice busted up and stopped Cintron and lost to Williams. Even though there is no proof Margarito had loaded gloves in those fights, the plaster inserts Sugar Shane Mosley's crafty trainer Naasim Richardson found in Marga-sleazo's wraps last year were, witnesses testified, stained with blood from previous use.

Funny how much time Margarito's promoter Bob Arum spends blustering that his plaster-assisted protégé was railroaded by a racist commission (where white Anglos were in a minority), yet Arum can never find two minutes to call the California commission to ask for a hearing on the matter. Isn't the body that suspended him the logical place to go for another U.S. license? Makes you wonder whether Arum fears the state Attorney General's Office would try again to present its evidence that Margarito also used loaded gloves against Cotto.

Fernando Beltran, who owns a promotional piece of Marga-sleazo along with Arum, dangled the bait of a September contest against Manny Pacquiao in tourist-starved Las Vegas—in exchange for a Nevada license, of course. But I digress.

What about putting a Cintron-Williams rematch on a card with Chris Arreola-Tomasz Adamek II? Title the night "Do It Again Twice." You heard it here first.

Juiced Athletes: Also winning a seat in the Philippines Congress along with Manny Pacquiao was, amazingly, Imelda Marcos, who took time off from reassembling a shoe collection so she could screw up her country some more. It remains to be seen whether Manny's good intentions will outweigh whatever evil the former First Lady cooks up.

One good thing did come out of the Mayweathers' crazy, clumsy, unfounded accusations against Pacquiao. They focused attention on illegal performance enhancing substances, an issue that organized sports largely ignores.

New study results from the Montreal-based World Anti-Doping Agency show that combining growth hormone with testosterone injections in men gave them an average 8.3 percent increase in sprint capacity. This was a serious scientific blind study, with some participants taking placebos and others the real stuff. With expert guidance, the study noted, athletes can get past urine testing with this stuff in their system.

In big-time sports, with millions of dollars at stake, some athletes and trainers will take this proven shortcut if they know they won't get caught. Physicians can legally prescribe the stuff

Adamek won fair and square

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

and they do, though long-term effects are largely unknown. Either administer blood tests or assume some performances are chemically assisted, and no, I'm not talking about Pacquiao. Accusing someone of doping without proof is like accusing someone of child molesting without proof.

Tough Pole: Adamek joins a long line of light heavies and cruisers over the years who, coming toward the end of their careers, have realized their bank balances aren't what they'd like them to be and decided to take their chances in the more lucrative heavyweight division.

By challenging Southern California's Arreola on his home turf, New Jersey-based Adamek took part in another one of those time-honored East Coast-West Coast tussles and won it fair and square by using the ring, sticking to the plan, and throwing sharp punches that busted up his bigger opponent.

This was one of the best matches you could make in a largely dull division. Arreola said he hurt his left early and I believe him, but that's boxing. Conceding that Adamek deserved the victory, he said, "I hate to [bleeping] lose," adding that he "[bleeping] hates having a guy running around the [bleeping] ring all night. But [Adamek] did what he was supposed to do."

Retired At Last: John Ruiz's Greco-Roman wrestling moves defied the time-space continuum, making a 12-rounder stretch out over what seemed like a day and a half or more. He had decent skills and a solid punch, but hit-and-hold became his drug of choice, and at the end, when he vowed not to use it anymore, almost no one cared. But he was always a decent guy and willing to face any man. When fighters announce their retirement, it usually means they're taking a recess before their next round of fights, but I like to take them at their word. And I wish Mr. Ruiz many happy, healthy days ahead.

Futch One: To Floyd Mayweather, who figured out a tough opponent, refused to back off, and, tirelessly over 12 rounds, shut him down. This big talker once again walked the walk with class and precision.

Futch Two: To Roger Mayweather for taking the high road at the weigh-in when Floyd Junior's sidekick Leonard Ellerbe pronounced Shane "very nervous." Uncle Roger declared, "My nephew's nervous too. Any guy going in there risking death is nervous." Mosley, he added, "can't be too nervous. He's got five world championships."

Magoo One: To judge Joseph Pasquale, who came all the way from New Jersey to California to score it a hilarious 117-111 for New Jersey-based Adamek over Arreola. Adamek deserved the victory, but Pasquale gave Arreola only three rounds in a close fight that Adamek won by majority decision. Ticket-buyers who saw this bout in the flesh and viewers who caught it on HBO all contributed to the salary and travel expenses of Pasquale for his amateurish impersonation of an impartial judge.

When a fighter does something really reprehensible, the commission can withhold his purse. Judges who put in this kind of performance deserve the same treatment.

Magoo Two: Judge Fritz Werner's score of 39-37 for Williams and Jerry Cantu's 40-36 for Cintron were both defensible in an abbreviated match that was hard to score. But James Jen Kin's 40-36 for Williams couldn't possibly be correct. He earns a Magoo.

Magoo Three: To the insiders in ringside seats who watched Cintron slam into the table in front of them without trying to break his fall and then stood frozen when he rolled off the table onto the concrete floor.

Magoo Four: To the "fans" in the MGM Grand Arena who left before the final round of Mayweather-Mosley. No real fight fan would entertain such a disturbed notion. We've grown used to attendees at big-time Las Vegas cards—many of them high rollers who earned their tickets by dropping big bucks at the tables—showing up only for the main event. But now they're leaving early too?

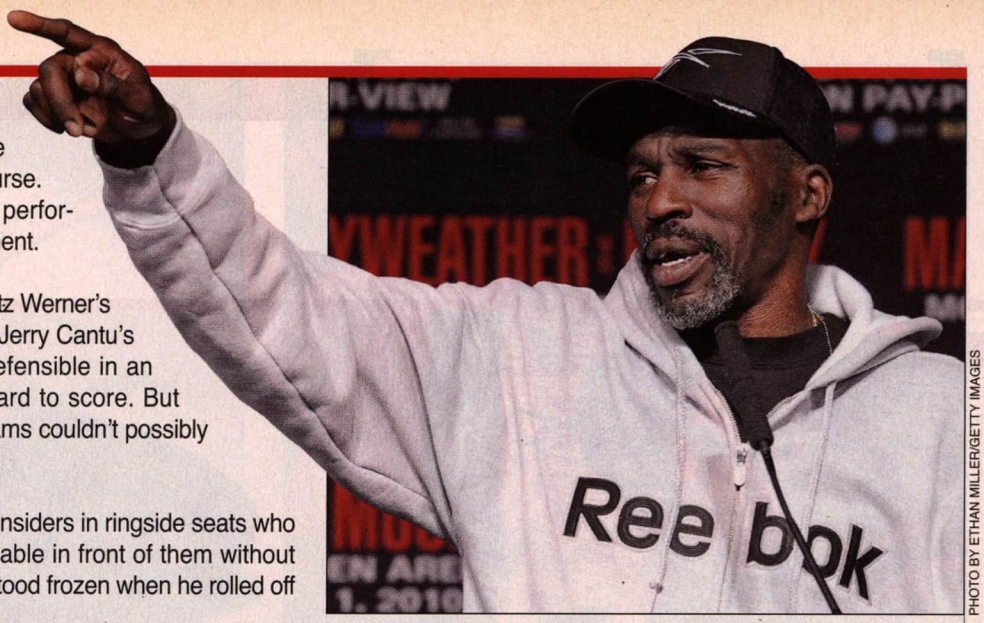


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Hard to believe, but Uncle Roger snags a Futch

The MGM Grand has misguidedly been called the Mecca of boxing. The sport's true Mecca is wherever true fans gather.

Last Jab: Sugar Shane, in the midst of a divorce from his wife and former manager Jin Mosley, may have lost his sprawling mansion in the hills east of L.A. and most of the stuff in it too, but he gained a heck of a new tattoo. ■

New tattoo didn't help Mosley

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

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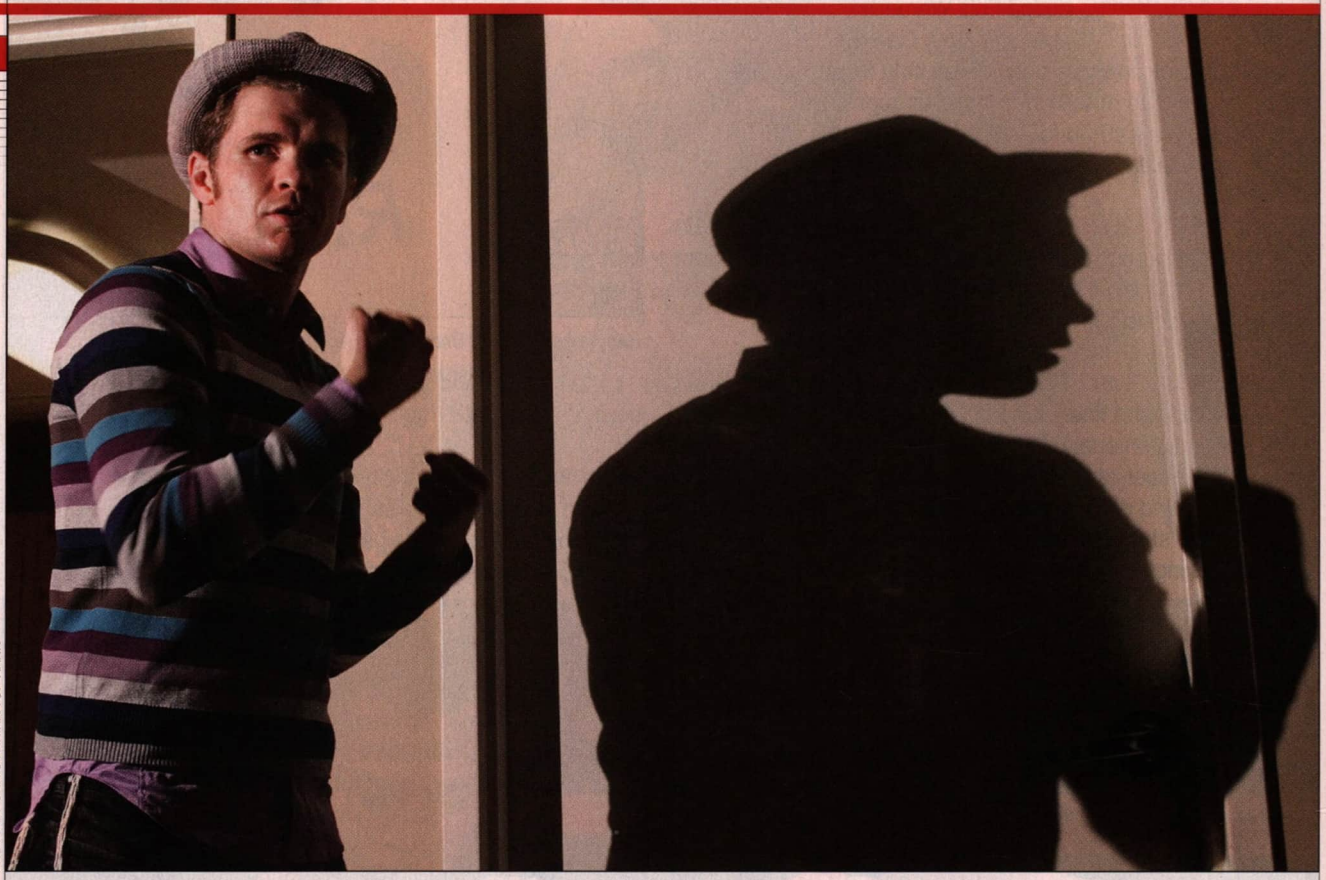

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

One of the drawbacks to mainstream coverage of boxing is that they rely on every overdone cliché, such as when the folks at Jimmy Kimmel Live! *convinced Yuri Foreman to do some "shadow boxing." Nevertheless, Foreman came off as rather likeable on his late-night TV appearance—though it wouldn't kill him to find a hat that fits.*

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

As if the Floyd Mayweather-Shane Mosley fight wasn't disappointing enough on its own, the fight weekend in Las Vegas featured a press conference with Ray Leonard and Tommy Hearns, whose rivalry could make even an excellent welterweight fight look boring by comparison. It appears as if "The Hit Man" wants to go at it one more time, though Sugar Ray has to remind him, "I'm over here, Tommy. You can't hit me if you're facing that way."

PHOTO BY TED ALJIBE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

It wasn't quite as good as her son singing "Sometimes When We Touch," but Dionesia "Pac-Mom" Pacquiao gave a performance of her own at Manny's victory party following his election to congress in the Philippines, entertaining the masses with a dance routine. Side note: We showed this photo to Floyd Mayweather Sr., and when he saw the male dancers so effortlessly holding Dionesia up in the air, he immediately concluded that they all must be on steroids.

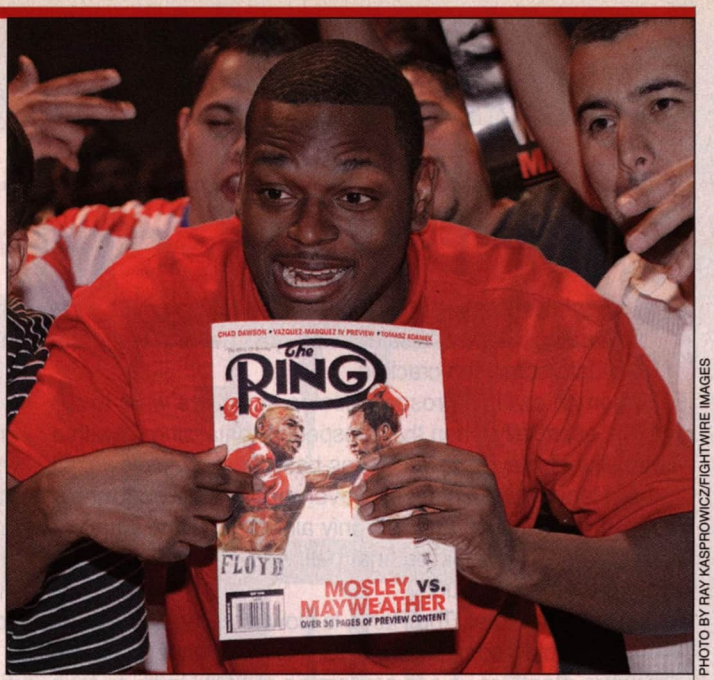

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

We never object to a little free promotion for THE RING, so here's a fan showing off his copy at the Mayweather-Mosley weigh-in. This fan certainly looked smart the next night, when he had some reading material to occupy his time after Mosley ceased to be competitive a few rounds into the fight.

Usually when two fighters are about to break and a cue ball is positioned between them, you expect the cue ball to say it's "fair but firm." In this case, however, Eric Morel and Jorge Arce are just playing a friendly game of pool and Joe Cortez is nowhere to be seen. The two veterans were scheduled to meet at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas, on June 26, but Arce suffered a cut training and the bout was canceled before either of them had a chance to knock the other into a corner pocket.

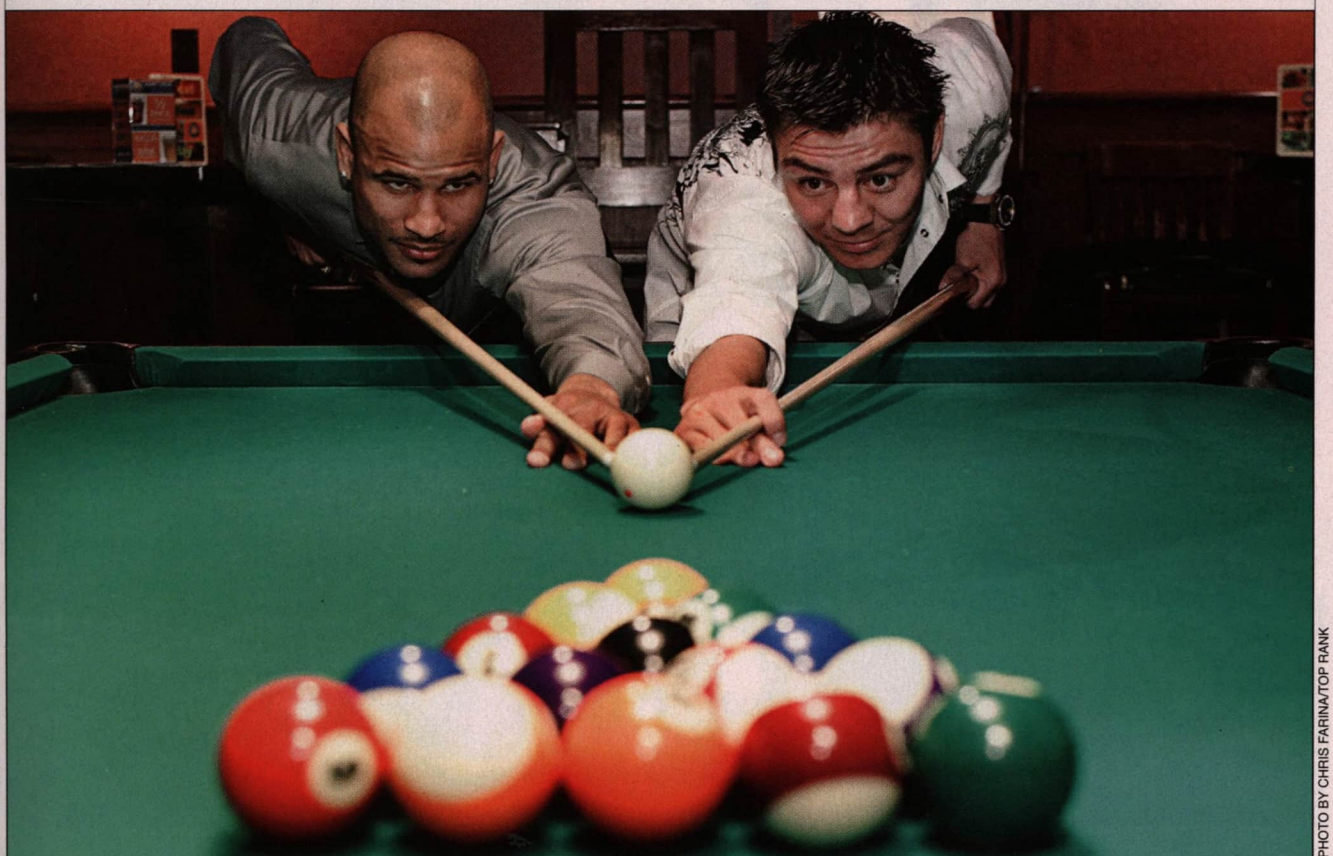

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

By Don Stewart

Omar Henry Junior Middleweight

Mitch Hedberg used to a joke that he once saw a wino eating grapes. "I said: Dude, you have to *wait*," the late comedian cracked.

When an exciting prospect comes along, we want to dig right in, especially when that prospect is tantalizing us with a Tyson-like display of power. Texas-based junior middleweight Omar Henry has pulverized seven of his nine opponents within three minutes, and has only allowed one foe, survivor Carlos Aballe, to hear the final bell. And even that guy got dropped in the last round.

Henry's promoter, Top Rank, is slowly raising the level of the 23-year-old's competition. Given his dominance, however, there are plenty of voices screaming out for Henry to take bigger leaps up in class. Now.

When the bell rings, Henry quickly rips into opponents as if he's running late for one of his college classes. His style is contradictory to a much more patient personality. Despite his fast start as a pro, Henry is realistic about his development. He sees himself as a ripe grape that still needs plenty of time and attention before becoming part of a fine wine.

"I'm patient, man," Henry said. "I know boxing's not an overnight thing. I don't want my career rushed like other fighters we've seen in the past. I'm just content with how they're moving me patiently. My day is coming."

In an age of instant gratification, Henry, 9-0 (8), is the type who always seems focused on the bigger picture.

Henry moved from Chicago, Illinois, to Houston, Texas, at age 16 to find top-level training. When his uncle's health began failing, Henry took the time to get licensed as a certi-

(Continued on Page 106)

Pro Record

2008		
July 18	Terence Anderson, Houston, TX	KO 1
2009		
Jan. 15	Justin Davis, Houston	KO 1
Feb. 7	Francisco Martinez, Anaheim, CA	KO 1
June 20	Alfonso Gonzalez, Ensenada, Mexico	KO 1
Aug. 29	Angel Sigala, Grand Prairie, TX	KO 1
Oct. 17	Carlos Aballe, Corpus Christi, TX	W 4
Dec. 19	Jessie Davis, Youngstown, OH	KO 1
2010		
March 1	Francisco Reza, Grapevine, TX	KO 1
April 3	Orphius Waite, Corpus Christi	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
9	9	0	0	8

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

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PACQUIAO SCORES POLITICAL KNOCKOUT

Will Public Service Prove Tougher Than Boxing?

By Ted Lerner

History is noticeably stingy in offering examples of boxers who have simultaneously held the position of elected public official and world champion. In fact, there were none, until pound-for-pound king Manny Pacquiao was recently elected as a congressman for the southern Philippine province of Sarangani.

Now the little dynamo, whose swashbuckling exploits inside and outside the ring have made him a worldwide sensation, has taken his game to an entirely new level, confounding the pundits yet again and fulfilling a long-held dream of going into public service.

What he did and how he did it have only added to his legend. Pacquiao, who once roamed the streets hustling for scraps, staved off intrigue, ridicule, violence, and pleas from his friends to give it all up and did what barely anyone gave him a chance of doing: He defeated a long-entrenched, wealthy ruling clan to grab the lone congressional seat in his desperately poor rural district.

Coming on the heels of nearly a decade of tearing through the best in boxing, people everywhere are rightfully wondering: Is there anything this guy can't do?

While talk of Pacquiao ascending to the presidency of the Philippines is preposterously premature, for the moment one thing is vibrantly clear: This is a man who lives and thrives on an action-packed high wire few people in any walk of life can comprehend.

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pacquiao greets his supporters at a campaign rally in poverty-stricken Sarangani province. His unprecedented popularity, huge campaign chest, and the people's desperate need for change combined to make Pacquiao an upset winner in what is being described as a "landslide."

Like a hotshot poker player at the top of his game, Pacquiao seems to know his opponents breaking point and then hones in for the crushing kill, fearlessly pushing all his chips to the center of the table.

This was evident in how he approached his run for office. While Pacquiao was laughed at for being a political novice, his campaign revealed the exact opposite: street-smart political instincts coupled with a singularly focused tenacity. All of this was backed up by the same traits he brings into the ring every time he fights: an unwavering confidence and swagger that he can do anything and succeed at it.

Having lost badly in his first try for congress in 2007 in his hometown of General Santos City, Pacquiao was much better prepared this time. One of his first calculated moves was to try for the seat in a neighboring province, near where he grew up and the hometown of his wife, Jinkee. Many people thought this was political suicide because Pacquiao's opponent came from such a wealthy and politically deep-rooted family. But Pacquiao sensed he had certain advantages.

"Gen San and Sarangani have different voter profiles," said Edwin Espejo, a freelance journalist based in Pacquiao's hometown. "Gen San is more urbanized, while Sarangani is more rural and one of the poorest provinces. Thus it has a lower voter profile. These are people more prone to vote for someone based on popularity."

The Philippine electorate, with its tens of millions of poor who make up a decidedly unsophisticated body of voters, regularly elect famous actors and sportsmen to high political office based solely on their popularity, and this election proved no exception.

Pacquiao, however, didn't let this fact make him complacent. He took nearly two years to piece together his campaign organization, and when he returned from the Joshua Clottey fight in mid-March, he hit the campaign trail with a well-crafted message: "I am one of you. I know your struggles because I was once where you are now. I earned all my own money so I won't steal a penny of yours. Give me a chance to serve you."

On top of his heartfelt pleas, Pacquiao's glitzy campaign sorties, complete with sexy song-and-dance numbers, brought Hollywood-style hype to people

PHOTO BY TED ALJIBE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Immediately after his plane landed at Manila International Airport following his victory over Joshua Clottey, Pacquiao began to campaign. He is pictured here surrounded by political allies and his family—wife Jinkee, sons Jimuel and Michael, and daughter Princess.

Pacquiao waves to his fans from a vehicle he shared with presidential candidate Manny Villa and vice-presidential candidate Loren Legarda. Pacquiao was the only winner among the trio.

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

whose everyday lives could best be described as tortuously monotonous. Pacquiao also brought along a throng of international media, who showed up to cover his every movement along the campaign trail. Even his boxing promoter, Bob Arum, joined the campaign for the final week, fulfilling what he said was a lifelong dream to become a political operative, even though it is highly illegal for foreigners to be involved in Philippine politics. Arum's presence, though, actually may have served to calm the nerves of voters who thought a Congressman Pacquiao would never fight again.

Clearly, the long-suffering people of Sarangani were overawed. The ultimate factor, of course, was Pacquiao backing it all up with the grease that keeps all political wheels everywhere churning smoothly—piles and piles of good old-fashioned cash. As the votes were rolling in and it looked like he was going to win, so proud was Pacquiao that he excitedly boasted to several reporters that success came because he had just unleashed an "atomic bomb" on the province. That was a barely veiled reference that nobody needed to translate. Pacquiao was said to have withdrawn nearly $2-million in cash from the bank in the final days of the campaign.

"Reports coming in from people I knew said that money flowed directly to voters," Espejo said.

In fact, vote-buying allegations, a common facet in Philippine elections, emanated from both sides. What is certain, however, is that Pacquiao, as with everything else he does, went all-in. He spent a fortune to get the job done, some say over $10-million. And his opponent, despite representing the province's richest clan, wilted under the pressure.

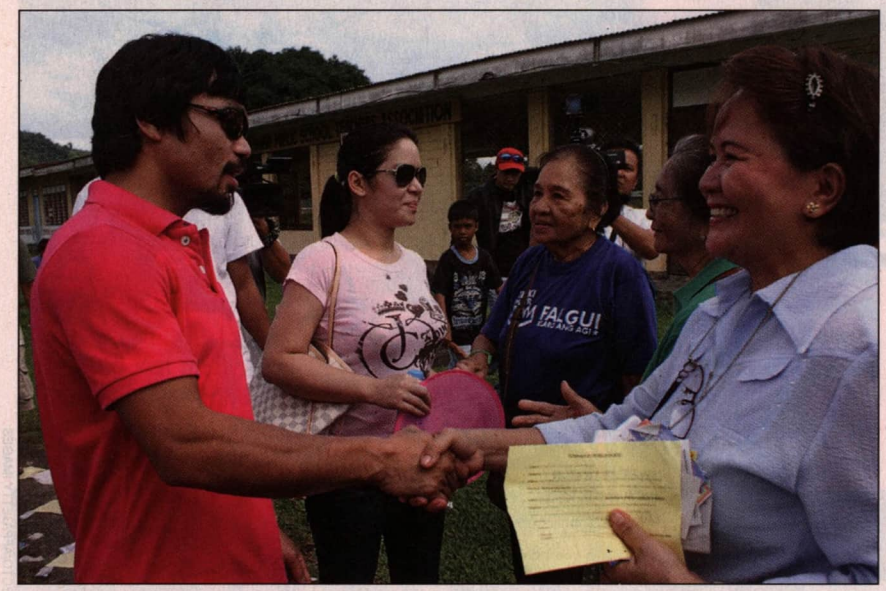
"They [the Chiongbians, the family of Pacquiao's opponent Roy Chiongbian] didn't want to spend that much to win a seat in congress," Espejo said. "By spending that kind of money, Manny raised the ante. And the Chiongbians just folded."

While this may be bad news for those hanging on Pacquiao's promise of a new kind of politics, the good news for boxing fans is that newly elected Congressman Pacquiao has indicated that he wants to continue fighting, perhaps as many as three more bouts. On the face of things, it would appear that his duties as a public servant would hardly hamper him from competing at the highest levels. The 287 members of the Philippines House of Representatives convene for eight months out of the year to ostensibly debate national policy and craft laws. Nobody expects Pacquiao to be a dean of the congress, and even if he barely shows up, it won't surprise anyone. Many congressmen in the Philippines skip sessions, forcing the House to twist the rules to come up with a quorum so that something can be accomplished.

Pacquiao, though, insists he's dead serious about helping the poor of Sarangani, and we now know it's unwise to doubt that he can deliver on anything he promises. But politics in the Philippines can hardly compare to boxing and this is exactly where things can turn dicey for Pacquiao and his fans.

For one thing, Pacquiao will have to adapt to his new life of public servant. Before, he was a highly successful private person doling out bags of groceries to the poor, a coffin for somebody's dead relative, cash for a prescription or a scholarship. Now he's the "Honorable

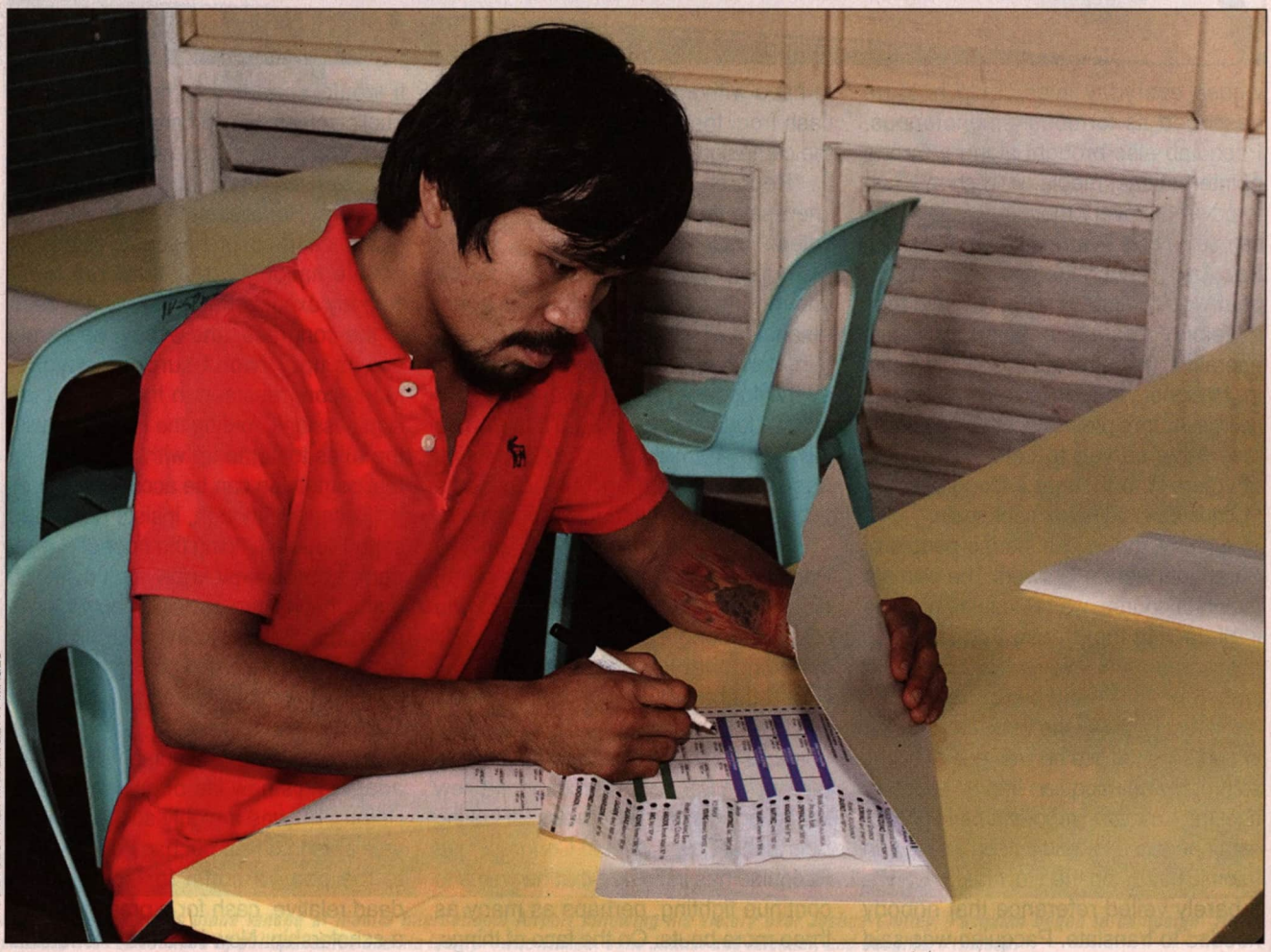
Congressman Emmanuel Pacquiao." In the eyes of his constituents, that lofty moniker means Pacquiao holds the keys to the national treasury. Actually, the $2-million Congressman Pacquiao will receive from the federal government for his pet projects is not as much as it might seem. Still, a lot of politics is about perception, and the perception is that Pacquiao has way more dough than his official government "pork." Thus, literally everyone will be breaking down his gate to get money, government contracts, and to curry favor. If you think Pacquiao's spread thin now, just wait a few months.



Even more ominous for Pacquiao is the nature of the new world he now inhabits. Philippine politics is a never-ending merry-go-round of intrigue, drama, money, gossip, conniving, back-stabbing, and outrageous violence. In certain locations, such as the large southern island of Mindanao where Pacquiao lives, politics is akin to life in the Wild, Wild West.

Pacquiao's lifestyle of late-nights, billiards, high-stakes poker, and cock-fighting, while surrounded by a veritable army of gun-toting security guards and various nefarious characters, is one that could easily taint his reputation. Fans who like their superheroes to be perfect may not like what they see when the tumult of third world politics rips away the thin veil of virtue.

Pacquiao shakes hands with a voter outside the polling center at a local school in the township of Kiamba in Sarangani Province (above). Shortly afterward, Manny filled out his ballot (below).



PHOTOS BY JEOFFREY MAITEM/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY TED ALJIBE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pacquiao and his mother, Dionesia, celebrate her 60th birthday and his election victory at a gala affair in General Santos City. Despite his new duties as a congressman, Pacquiao intends to continue his boxing career.

This is the enormous risk Pacquiao faces as he enters the sordid world of Philippine politics at the relatively young age of 31. Gazing beyond the enormous hype surrounding his latest triumph, one gets the feeling that this new chapter in Pacquiao's incredible life is the beginning of the end of innocence. For the time being, of course, Congressman Pacquiao will surely enjoy a honeymoon period with Filipinos. But whether the long-term prospects of Pacquiao's latest venture result in a happy ending are definitely open to question. And he's known to take defeat and criticism rather poorly.

That's why, in certain respects, staying active in the ring could be the perfect foil for Pacquiao's life as a politician. For as long as he fights, Pacquiao will remain above the fray in Philippine society, almost untouchable. It's only when he retires from boxing and becomes just another politician attempting to accumulate more power that his political opponents will surely remove the gloves as well.

The big question is how can Pacquiao deliver on the grand promises he made to his people. The poverty in Sarangani stems from highly complicated, deep-rooted issues, and it will take a lot more than the mere presence of boxing's top attraction to make them disappear. What is likely to happen is that financial and funding realities will, at first, present a major stumbling block to Pacquiao's grand plans. Even so, knowing Pacquiao's sincerity and his determination to back up his words with deeds, he'll end up pushing all his chips into the center of the table. That means he may very well just drop much of his own personal fortune on his people.

There's a huge risk of all of this going completely awry in more ways than one. Pacquiao could look like a complete fool, or he could, one day, end up broke. And if he loses badly in the ring and flops as a politician, Pacquiao will be pilloried by his detractors.

More than ever, boxing legend and now Congressman Pacquiao has everything riding on the line, with absolutely nothing guaranteed. Of course, that's exactly the odds Pacquiao plays with in every hand dealt to him. It's that danger and uncertainty, combined with his supreme confidence to succeed that makes his life so riveting.

We've loved Pacquiao the boxer since the very beginning because he always goes all in. With Congressman Pacquiao, we should not expect anything less. ■

Ted Lerner is THE RING's Philippines correspondent.

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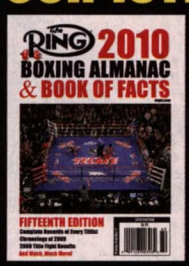

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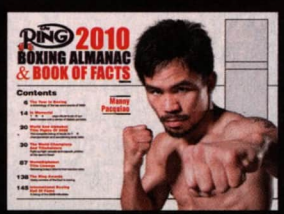

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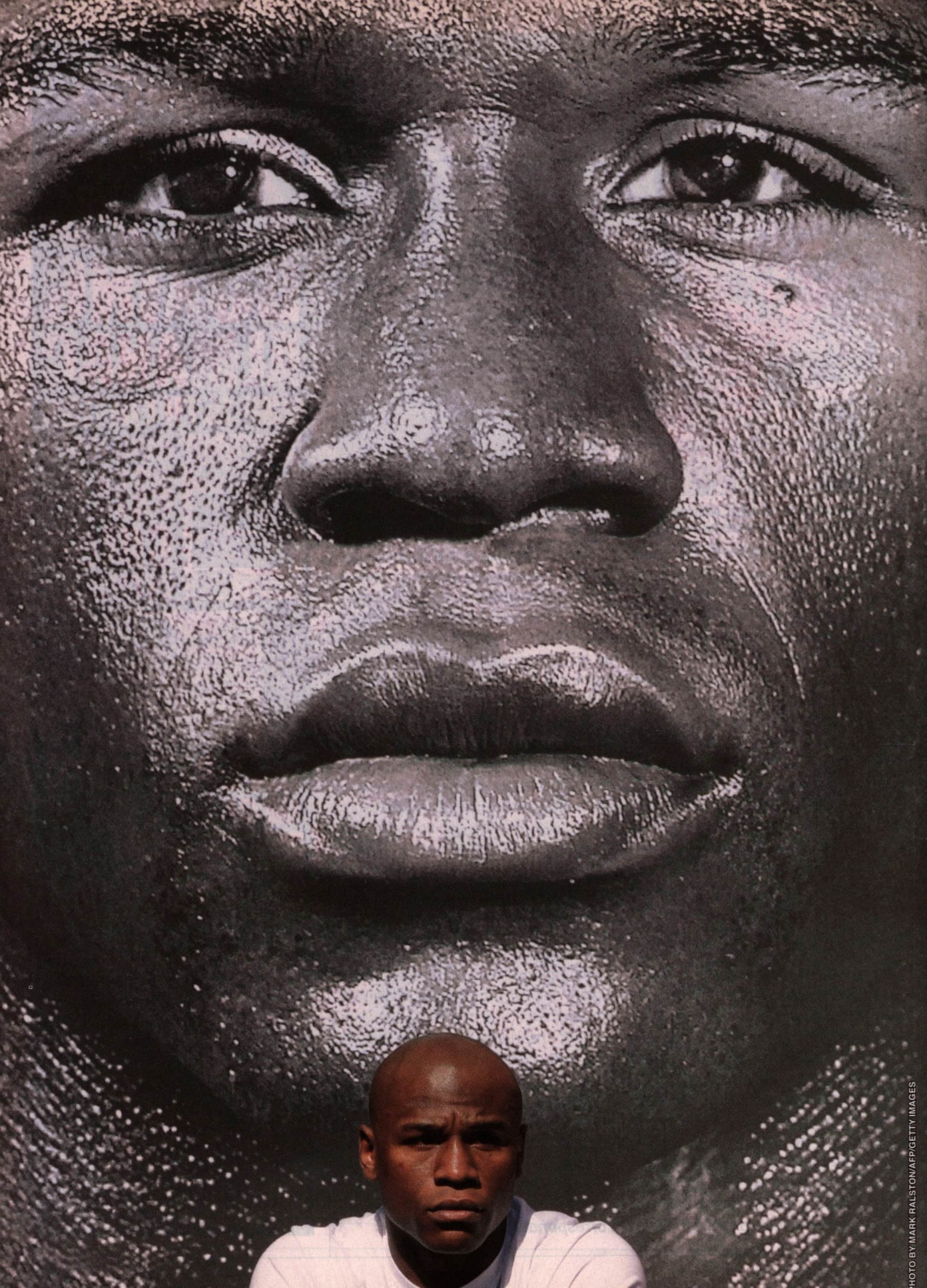


PHOTO BY MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

THE MAN BEHIND MONEY

The Many Faces Of Floyd Mayweather

By Joseph Santoliquito

Floyd Mayweather stood there with a sheepish grin on his face that was almost childlike, momentarily away from the insulating enclave that seems constantly tethered to him. He was shaking hands and mingling with everyone who passed by him in the congested nightclub, where just walking a few feet meant a long wait. Clusters of fans were there to pay homage to arguably the best fighter in the world.

For once, Mayweather was relaxed—showing a much different side of himself than he had in the days leading up to his fight with Shane Mosley. He wasn't combative or rebellious. He wasn't screaming about how great he is. In many ways, he was like the young portrait of himself on the side of the Mayweather tour bus, parked out front of the MGM Grand: the shot of the toddler with the uneven Afro in boxing gloves that come up almost to his shoulders.

What remains of that little boy, the charming "Little Floyd," is difficult to tell. The picture of him on the bus is a starkly contrasting image compared to the many brash likenesses of his alter ego, "Money May." You can't help but wonder if Floyd Mayweather is channeling the public persona "Money," or is Money channeling Little Floyd?

It wasn't always that way. Before the pumped-up bodyguards and myriad sycophants that surround him today, before the distorted, twisted version of Money arrived, he was just Little Floyd, an approachable, affable rising star.

Remarkably, Little Floyd reappeared after he dominated Mosley on May 1 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Once again, he was the reverent, gregarious Floyd and generously spent three hours with the media after the fight. Many of the same media that had bashed him before the Mosley fight as a haughty ingrate were by then feeding out of the palm of his hand.

Mayweather conducted the interviews while being barraged by autograph seekers, which he didn't seem to mind accommodating. They were some of the same fans that he'd blown off just days before. "Is that the same guy that walked right by me Wednesday?" asked one fan to another who snuck into the media room to get a glove signed.

Mayweather can have that kind of polarizing effect on people. He doesn't mind if you hate the public Floyd who's in front of the cameras, though privately, when you're sitting with him one-on-one, Mayweather presents a much different picture of himself.

"I do want people to like me and follow me," Mayweather admitted in a hushed tone, away from all his minions, away from the hoopla and circus milieu that seems to follow him everywhere he goes. "No, I don't want to be looked at as a bad guy, because I know I'm not a bad guy, not to anyone who knows me. There is a lot of Little Floyd, you might say, still in me. But people and fans, and especially the media, have to understand, you have to do certain things to sell a fight.

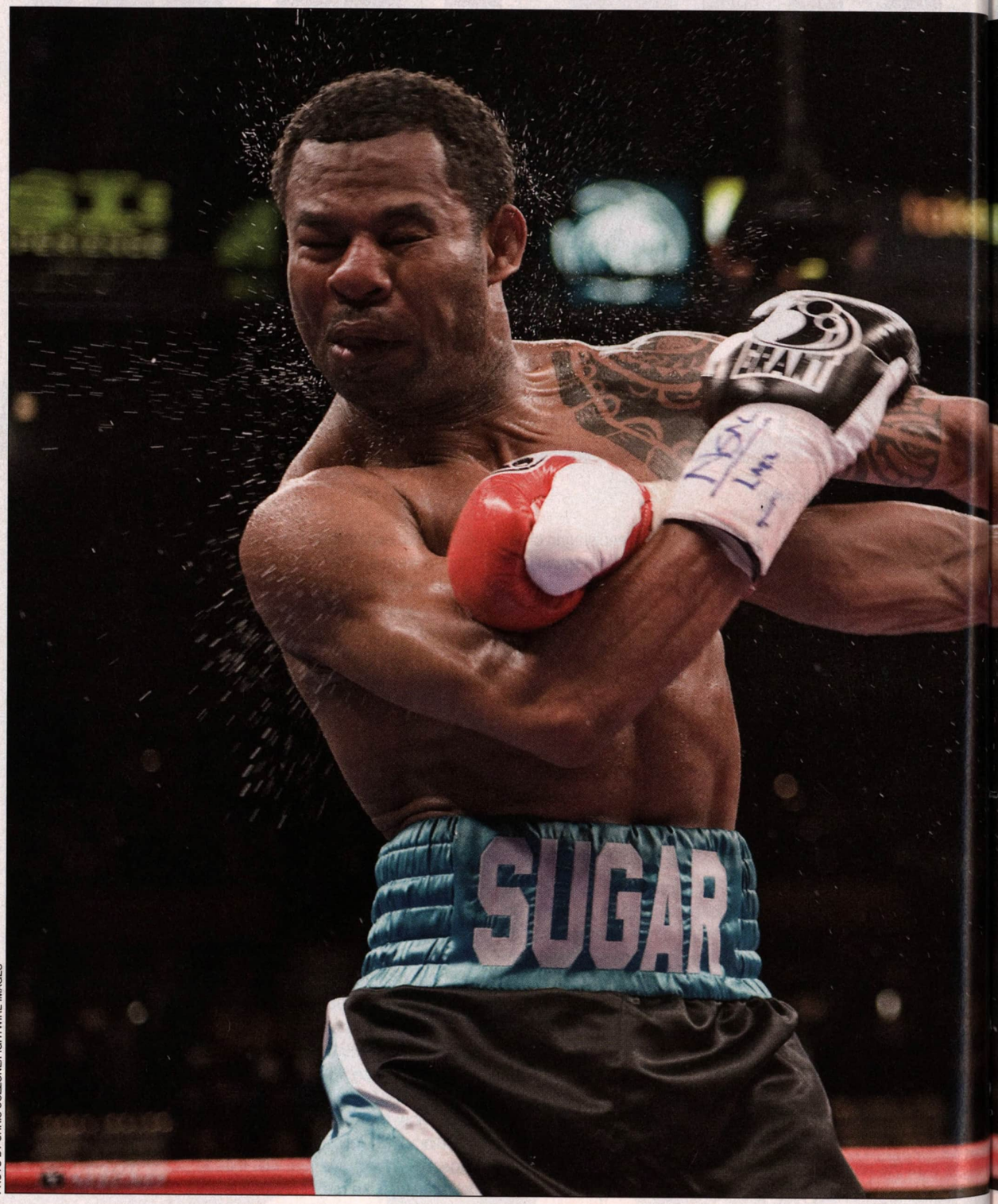
"There's a certain part of you that you have to give up. I suppose that's the Little Floyd side of me. Yes, I am Money Mayweather, the guy who likes to throw money at TV cameras and likes to walk around with a fat wad in my pocket. But I'm also a father now, too, and I have kids to feed. That image keeps me in a million-dollar mansion and takes care of my family and my kids. If people have a problem with that, f___ 'em, I can't help that. Like I said, 'Like me, hate me, as long as you put your money

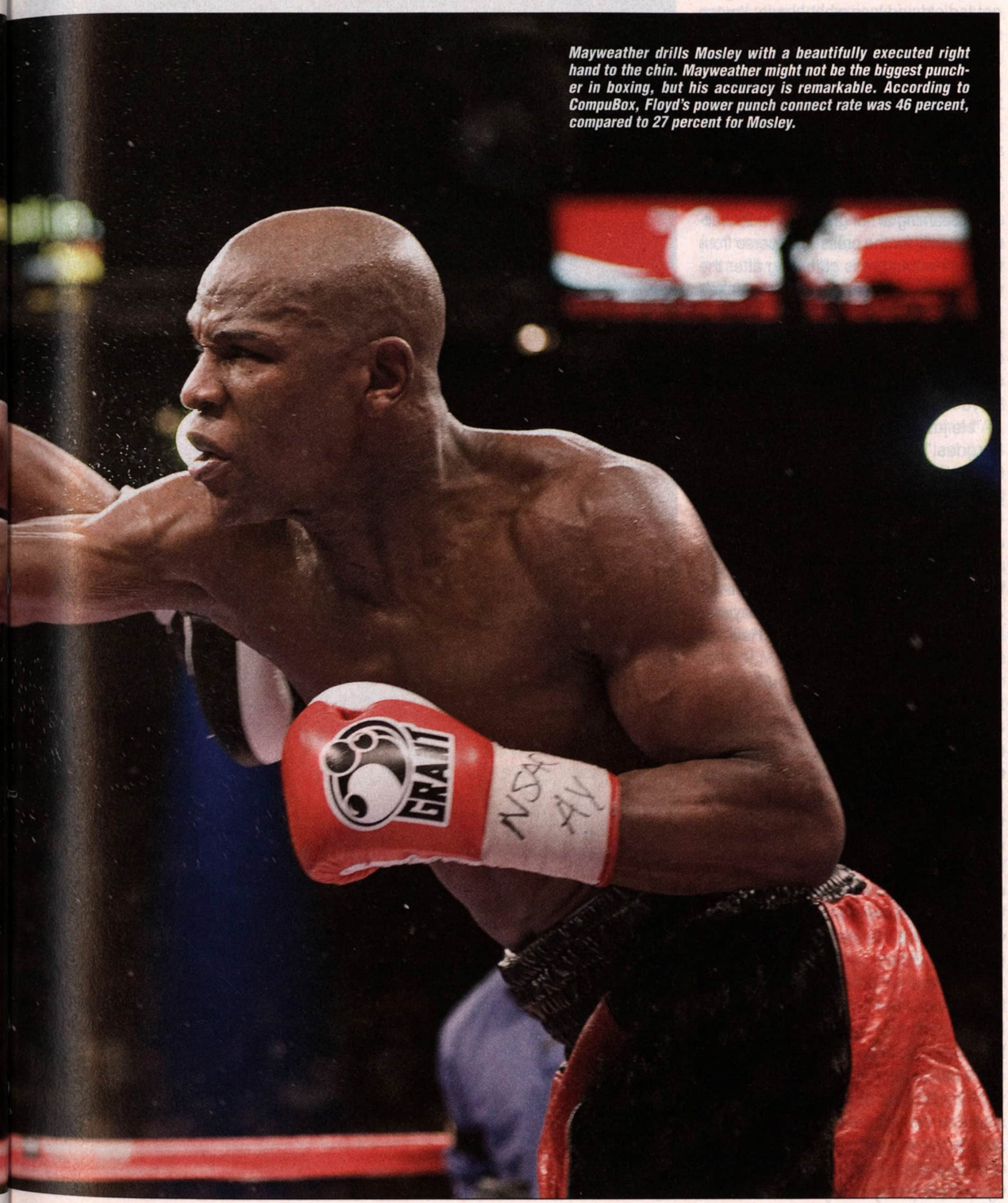
down to watch me.' I think fans need to know there is a difference between the public me and the private me."

But the public very rarely gets a glimpse into that private world. Sure, HBO's *24/7* tries to provide vignettes as to who Mayweather really is, but much of that is contrived dribble for the camera's illuminated red lights. Peeling through his dual facades might require an army of psychologists to figure out the man behind Money.

Still, his image as a rich, spoiled brat in many people's eyes constantly chases and claws at him. He says he doesn't mind it, though deep down, you can't help but sense he's disappointed by it.

"I really don't know what more I have to do," Mayweather reflected. "I do everything fans want, yes, I really think I do. They want me to fight [Oscar] De La Hoya; I beat De La Hoya. They want me to fight [Ricky] Hatton; I beat Hatton. When the [Manny] Pacquiao fight fell through, who was the best option out there, Mosley, right? I beat him, and now it's back to Pacquiao again. It's frustrating. I really think it's a respect thing. Look I'm the best fighter of this





Mayweather drills Mosley with a beautifully executed right hand to the chin. Mayweather might not be the biggest puncher in boxing, but his accuracy is remarkable. According to CompuBox, Floyd's power punch connect rate was 46 percent, compared to 27 percent for Mosley.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

generation. No one is better than me, and it's like people can't get enough.

"What they really want to see is me get my ass kicked. I know that's never going to happen, because I'll get out before I get too old and lose what I have. I'm too smart for that."

Mayweather remains many things to many people. To Bernice Mayweather, Floyd's grandmother who the then-16-year-old Floyd lived with after Floyd Sr. went to federal prison for smuggling cocaine, he'll always be Little Floyd.

After the Mosley fight, Bernice stood there beaming at her grandson while waiting patiently for the press to disperse from the impromptu press gathering after the official press conference. She's watched Grand Rapids, Michigan, come alive each time Floyd's arrived back after another big victory. The radiantly smiling, happy-to-be-photographed-with-schoolchildren Floyd is the only Floyd she knows.

"He just lights up a room everywhere he goes," Bernice said. "He's always been that way. I remember when he was just a baby, always dancing and happy. He always loved playing basketball and making people around him happy, at least he's that way with his family. It hurts him when people say mean things about him. Some people say money and success changes you. Not him. He's still the same to me."

There are those who would argue that point. Who knows if it's the throes of narcissistic entitlement that cause him to bypass the HBO prefight meetings, a tacit obligation the cable giant expects from every fighter that appears on the network. Not Money. He's blown off the HBO broadcast team for both the Juan Manuel Marquez and Mosley fights, according to many sources. The only other fighters who have done that in the last decade were Naseem Hamed and a prime Roy Jones.

Yes, that version of Money's dominance over Little Floyd is palpable. He's a high-maintenance personality that doesn't like being challenged—or told what to do and when to do it.

"Floyd's a bit of a control freak who wants to control everything inside and outside the ring, I'll put it that way," HBO color analyst Larry Merchant said. "Public figures are pretty savvy when it comes

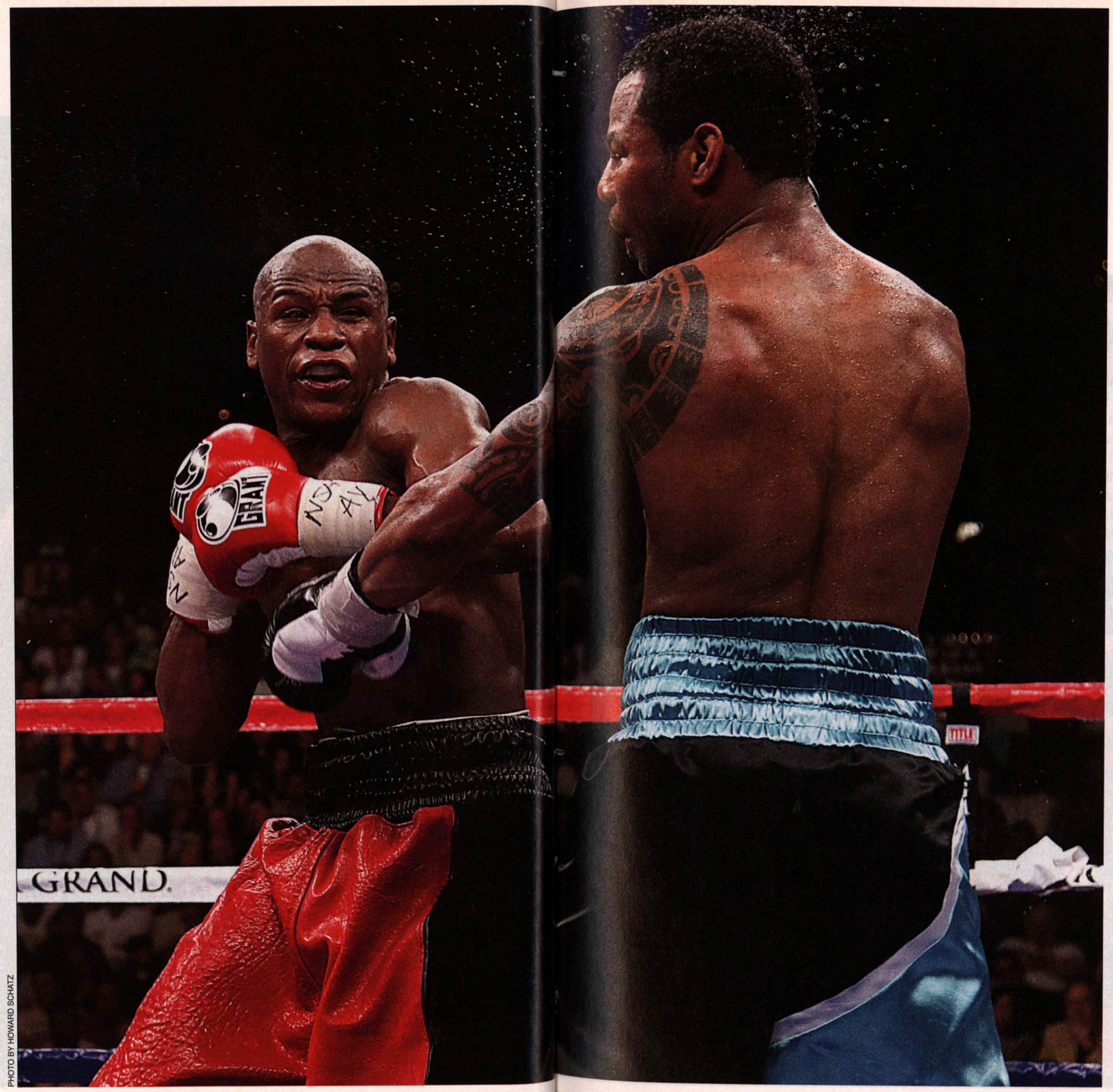


PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

time to manipulate the public to root for or against them. Floyd's been able to do that and make as much money as possible. There's no question that he calculates some of that and he wants to be provocative and projects himself as arrogant and self-absorbed. I said one time that he's a self-made man who worships his creator—him.

"The one thing I do have to say is what Floyd has pulled off: the ability to be a major star using a defensive style. It is pretty remarkable. He wants to be great, and I have no problem with that. No one questions his ability or commitment. It's just very unusual for a pure boxer, who generally sucks the drama out of fights by the way he fights and winning the way he does, to continue being an attraction."

Mayweather has become an attraction because he's filled the personality balloon for which the reality-TV world we live in clamors. No one was more adroit at marketing himself than Muhammad Ali, copying the theatrics template laid down by wrestler Gorgeous George. But "The Greatest" usually (though not always) did it in a jovial, teasing manner. With Mayweather, it's different. He's funny to Team Mayweather but hardly a barrel of laughs to anyone else. He's been known to throw snappish tantrums.

Perhaps no one has provoked that side of Money more during the last five years than ESPN's Brian Kenny. If there is a modern Ali-Howard Cosell pairing, it's been the Mayweather-Kenny combination. Some of their exchanges have been terse, others combustible, and some tinged with humorous banter.

"I think most people would be surprised that after our verbal sparring sessions, he's usually happy in the end," Kenny said. "I've seen all sides of him on and off camera. I've seen him be friendly more often than surly though. I know he plays up being a thug, but that's not his nature. I really do think he's genuinely a good guy, even when we were sort of at odds with each other."

One of Kenny's best recollections of Little Floyd came moments after Mayweather had smacked around the smaller Marquez. As a prelude, the two had had a series of interviews spiked by verbal jabs, and Kenny honestly didn't know what to expect when Mayweather climbed up the

steps of the makeshift ESPN stage after the Marquez fight.

The reception Kenny received caught him off guard.

Mayweather extended his arms to his TV antagonist, giving Kenny a hug, whispering into Kenny's ear, "Let's show everybody we're okay, and God bless you and your family."

"Floyd has that side," Kenny said. "The shame of it is that sometimes when we're having a good time and getting along on the air, it doesn't get as much air time. People want to see fireworks from him. It plays better on the air when he's defiant and surly; they show *those clips* more frequently, but I don't think that's really who he is."

Mayweather himself might not know where Money begins and where Little Floyd ends. Why doesn't he mend the schism between his superstar persona and who he really is—if Little Floyd *is* who he is?

That's the dichotomy of Money and Little Floyd that fans and media alike find so gnawing. To some degree, Mayweather has alienated a portion of his potential fan base with the Money image he projects.

"I don't know why," Mayweather said. "I have people tell me all of the time that I'm a lot nicer in person than the guy they see on TV hollering and yelling he's better than Ali and Sugar Ray Robinson. I think Money and Little Floyd have a lot in common. They both want to be great, only Money lets the world know, where Little Floyd, you can say, knows he's great. If I act like myself all of the time, do you think

EXCITING FOR A MINUTE

The punches were crisp, clean and landed right on the chin of Floyd Mayweather. And for a rare moment in his career, "Money May" was in serious trouble during the second round of his fight against Shane Mosley. Suddenly, the crowd of 15,117 (14,038 paid) at the MGM Grand Arena was going crazy and virtually everybody was on their feet in anxious anticipation of what everyone was hoping for—a fight.

Unfortunately, the moment passed and the give-and-take fight quickly turned one-sided. We did, however, find out a couple things about the 33-year-old Mayweather: He has a chin and he *will* fight back, as opposed to running, when hurt. Mayweather responded to what were probably the hardest shots he's ever taken by dominating Mosley, 46-6 (39), over the next 10 rounds.

Mayweather's skill and speed were too great for Mosley to handle, and it sucked out any drama "Sugar Shane" infused when he connected with a pair of knee-buckling rights in the second round.

Mosley rocked Mayweather's world in the second round

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

people would go out of their way to see me? People like to see the good guy win, not the bad guy. I like being the bad guy, though I know behind closed doors with my family, I know I'm the good guy."

What will happen if Mayweather decides to dial down the boorish Money May, if he grows weary of acting like a petulant child? Look at Ice Cube, who went from a stone-cold street rapper to an avuncular figure in the TV sitcom *Are We There Yet?* Can Mayweather make that kind of transformation?

"Floyd's trying to say that his Money image is just an act, but I knew Little Floyd since he was an amateur and he was respectful then," said Naazim Richardson, Mosley's trainer who's also a well-respected trainer on the amateur circuit. "He's trying to say it's an act, but that's actually who he's become. He sees how the public is responding to him. He can't ease out of who he is in fear of losing street cred; he has to ease out slowly. He's maturing and growing up. He still has a loyalty to the hood, but there's going to be a time when he has to try to balance and please everyone."

An anecdote that may reflect the complex sides of Mayweather came outside the ring, in a fight that didn't even involve him. On March 1, 2003, at UNLV's Thomas & Mack Center, Mayweather was sitting ringside cheering on his friend, Maurice Harris, against Fres Oquendo, on the undercard of the Roy Jones-John Ruiz heavyweight title fight.

Money Mayweather was in full froth, calling Oquendo a bum and screaming

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mayweather's brilliant boxing controlled rounds three through 12

"People didn't give Mayweather enough credit going into this fight," said Naazim Richardson, Mosley's trainer. "People forget the kid isn't undefeated for nothing. He's a fighter and Shane forced him to fight. There's no denying the skill and ability of Mayweather. We wanted Floyd to come forward; we wanted to make him uncomfortable. But Floyd adjusted and Shane didn't. Shane needed to let his hands go and score."

The unusual thing is that it was Mayweather attacking Mosley, 147, Pomona, California, in the third round, steering the course of the fight immediately to his favor. Mayweather, 146, Grand Rapids, Michigan, stressed that keeping the fight in the center of the ring was key. He felt he could exploit Mosley's tendency to keep his left hand down and he had no fear of Mosley's pitty-pat jabs or his power after the eventful second round.

Mayweather never admitted that Mosley's two second-round bombs hurt him. Instead, he dismissed the shots as something that "comes with the territory of boxing. This is a contact sport. Some time you're going to get hit with big shots, you must suck it up and keep fighting hard like a warrior."

By the seventh round, Mayweather had made the 38-year-old Mosley look like an old, worn-out warrior. In the eighth, the two engaged in a heated conversation, which was punctuated by Mayweather, 41-0 (25), slamming Mosley in the face as Sugar Shane was still talking. By the 11th, the final result was academic and fans began heading for the exit in droves.

Judges Adalaide Byrd (USA) and Robert Hoyle (USA) each scored it 119-109 for Mayweather, as did THE RING. Dave Moretti (USA) gave Mosley the first two rounds, scoring it 118-110. Kenny Bayless (USA) was the referee.

According to CompuBox, Mayweather out-landed Mosley 208 to 92, connecting on 44 percent of his punches to Mosley's scant 20 percent.

HBO Pay-Per-View announced that the fight generated 1.4 million pay-per-view buys and approximately $78-million in TV revenue, making it the second-biggest non-heavyweight pay-per-view bout in history. Not bad for one minute of intrigue.

—J.S.

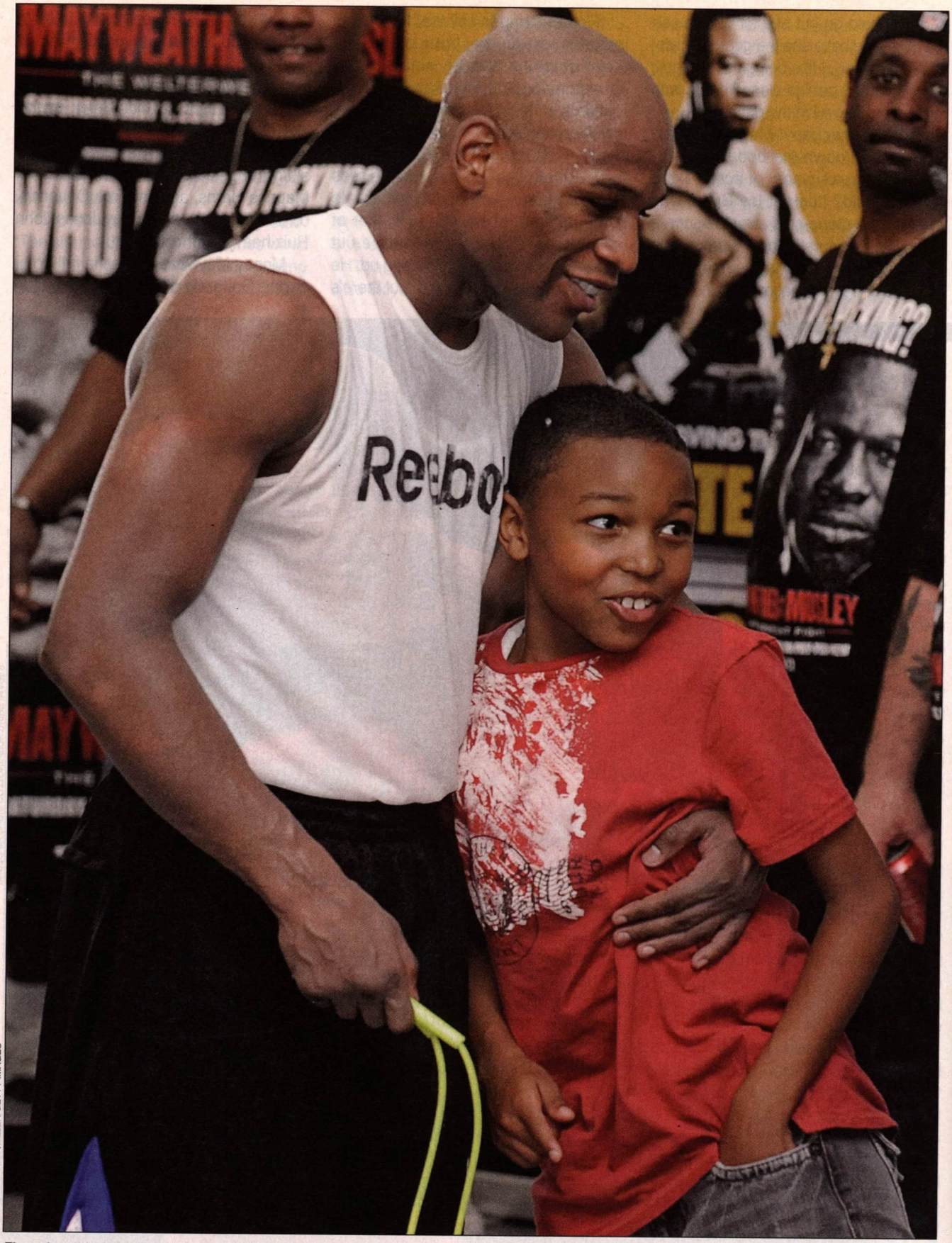


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

The softer side of Mayweather: Koraun Mayweather gets a hug from his father during a visit to the gym prior to the Mosley match. Although Floyd has a good relationship with his children, none of them live with him.

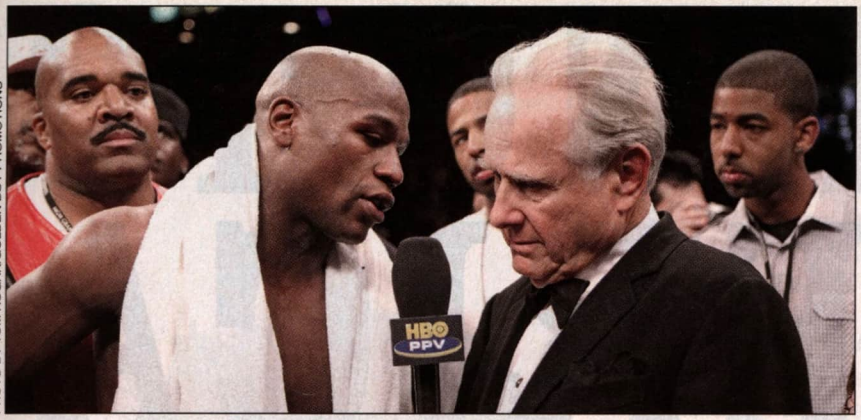


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

HBO's Larry Merchant interviews Mayweather following the Mosley fight. Merchant once said that Floyd is "a self-made man who worships his creator—him."

advice to his friend Harris, who obviously couldn't hear him. As the fight progressed and Mayweather kept verbally attacking Oquendo, who was winning the fight, someone behind Mayweather teasingly yelled: "If Oquendo is such a bum, Floyd, what does that make your pal Harris?" Mayweather wheeled around in his chair and began screaming in the fan's face when a taller, older gentleman sitting next to the fan intervened, graciously putting his long arm between the two, only to have Money May slap it away.

"Who are you? What do you know, who are you?!?" Money demanded. Someone seated next to Mayweather tapped him on the shoulder and pointed up to one of the retired UNLV numbers hanging from the Thomas & Mack Center rafters—the one that said Reggie Theus. When Mayweather saw that, he made a 180-degree about-face and melted. By the end of the night, Mayweather interacted with Theus as if they were lifelong buddies.

Emanuel Steward, who's also known Mayweather throughout his amateur and professional career, still sees glimmers of Little Floyd. Steward remembers the time when Ali wasn't so playful and when horrible things spilled out of his mouth in the late-1960s and early-'70s, especially involving Joe Frazier. Ali eventually overcame the original public persona he created to sell himself. Steward believes Mayweather can do the same.

"The character can take over the fighter anytime he says a lot, and Floyd certainly says a lot of things, so you start to believe it," the Hall of Fame trainer explained. "I still see the little boy side of him, that part of him is still inside. I think we're still going to see a public change in Floyd Mayweather. As a matter of fact, I'd bet on it." ■

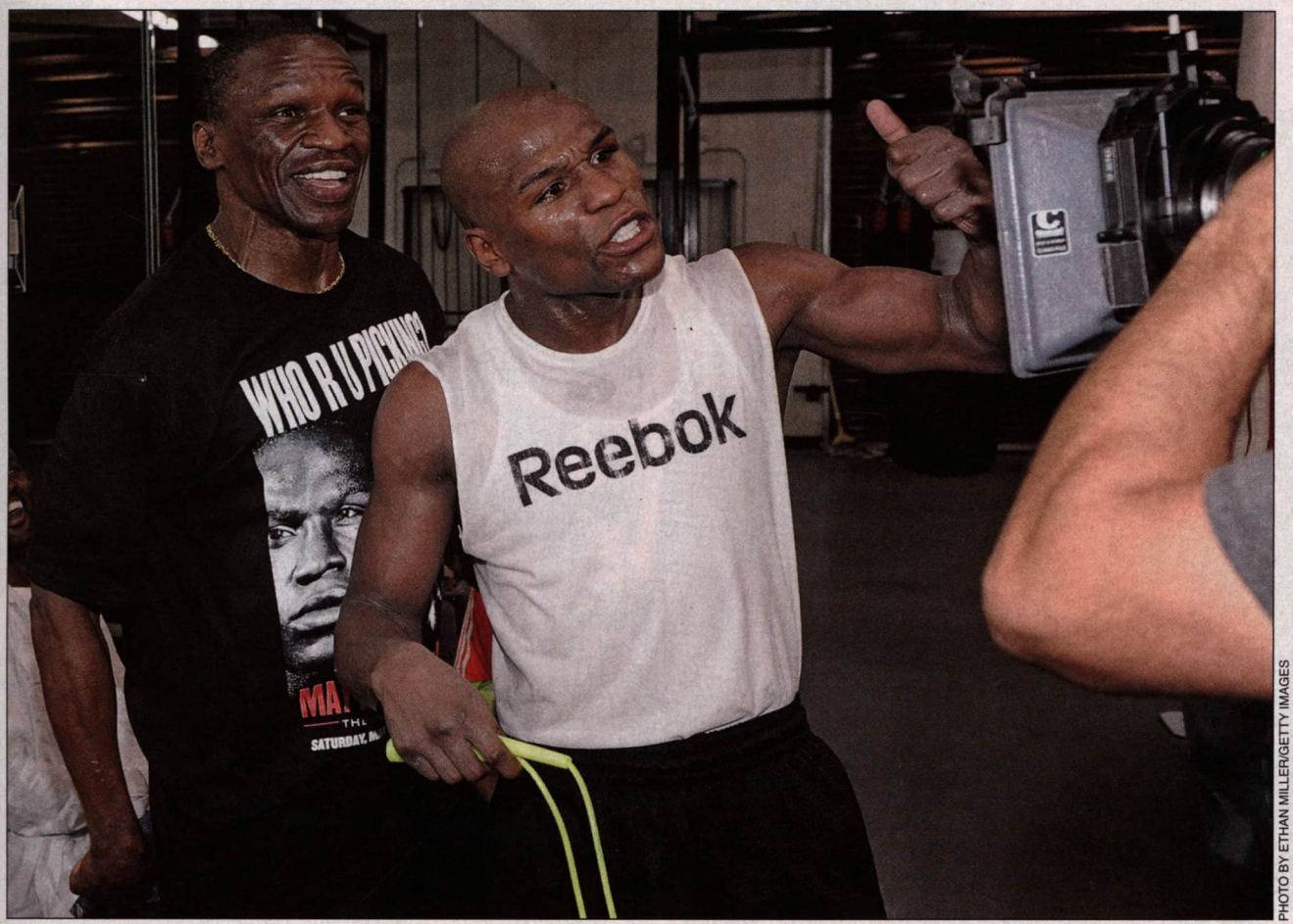


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Whenever he's on camera, Mayweather's "Money May" persona surfaces. This arrogant, loudmouthed side of his personality has helped make him a crossover star, but it's difficult to tell how much is an act and how much is really him. Whatever the case, Big Floyd seems to approve.

COMING TO AMERICA

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

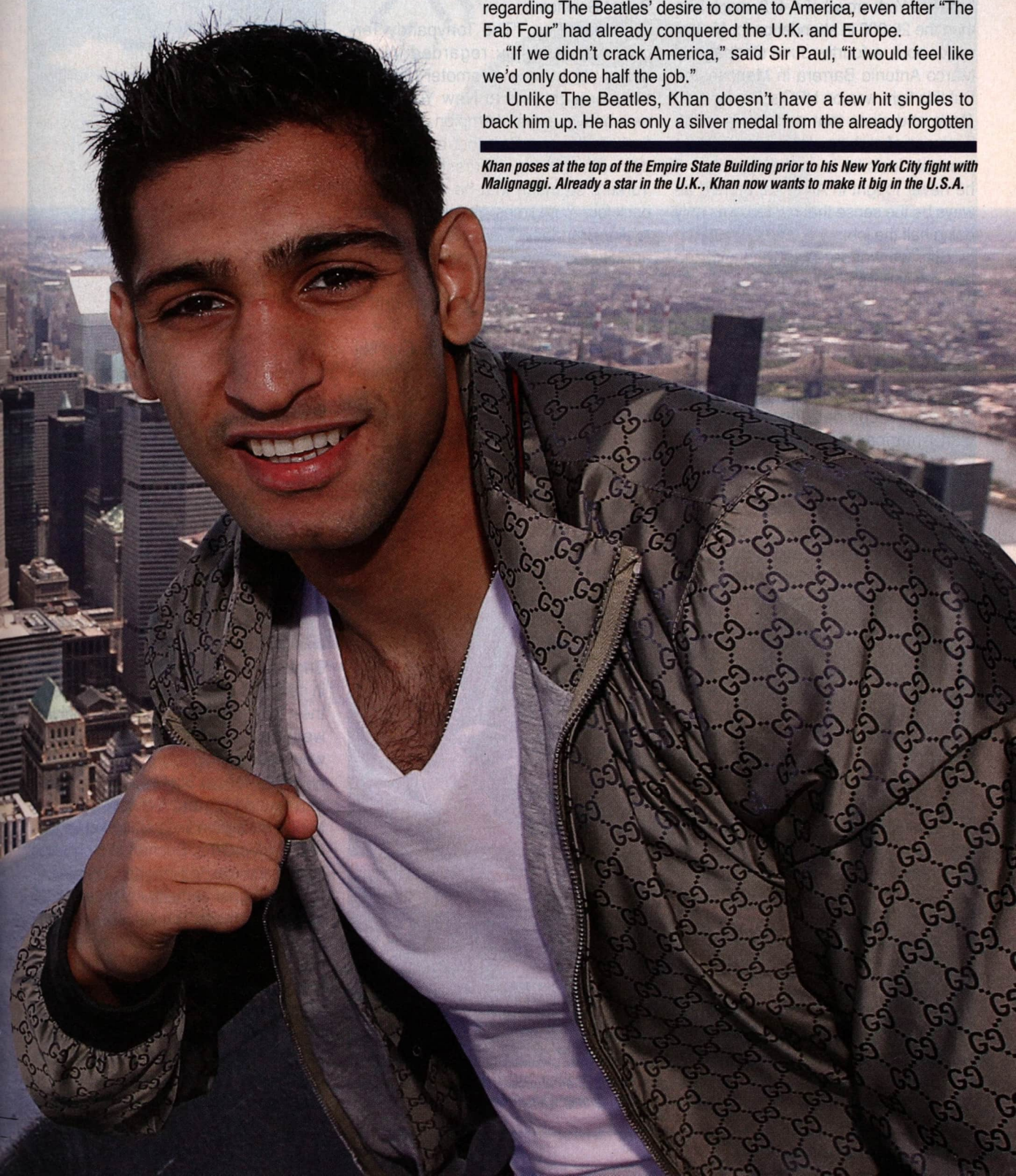
AMIR KHAN FOLLOWS A WELL-TRODDEN PATH

By Don Stradley

While watching England's Amir Khan handily defeat Paulie Malignaggi at The Theater at Madison Square Garden, one was reminded of what Paul McCartney once said regarding The Beatles' desire to come to America, even after "The Fab Four" had already conquered the U.K. and Europe.

"If we didn't crack America," said Sir Paul, "it would feel like we'd only done half the job."

Unlike The Beatles, Khan doesn't have a few hit singles to back him up. He has only a silver medal from the already forgotten



Khan poses at the top of the Empire State Building prior to his New York City fight with Malignaggi. Already a star in the U.K., Khan now wants to make it big in the U.S.A.

2004 Olympics and a career that few in America have noticed, except for YouTube clips of his first-round knockout loss to Breidis Prescott in 2008. That one was a shocker. However, like The Beatles, Khan is a star in the U.K., and didn't particularly need America.

He faced Malignaggi in front of a smallish New York crowd of 4,412, much less than the 20,000 in attendance for his last major bout, a fourth-round stoppage of Marco Antonio Barrera in Manchester. But this fight was on HBO's *Boxing After Dark*, and since that network is in the business of making stars, Khan's camp probably feels he is on the right path. If he never fought in America, there'd always be the sense that he, too, was only doing half the job.

Still, we wondered if Khan realized how many British fighters had been there before him. They weren't always treated kindly, not by opponents or the press.

"Prizefighters in England do not as a rule have the experience, the quality of opposition, or, among heavyweights, the size to compete on equal terms with American fighters in America," *Time*'s John Lardner wrote in 1946. After Tami Mauriello kayoed England's Bruce Woodcock, Lardner described Woodcock's chin as "hand-blown by Yorkshire craftsmen in Doncaster." And Lardner was one of the nice guys.

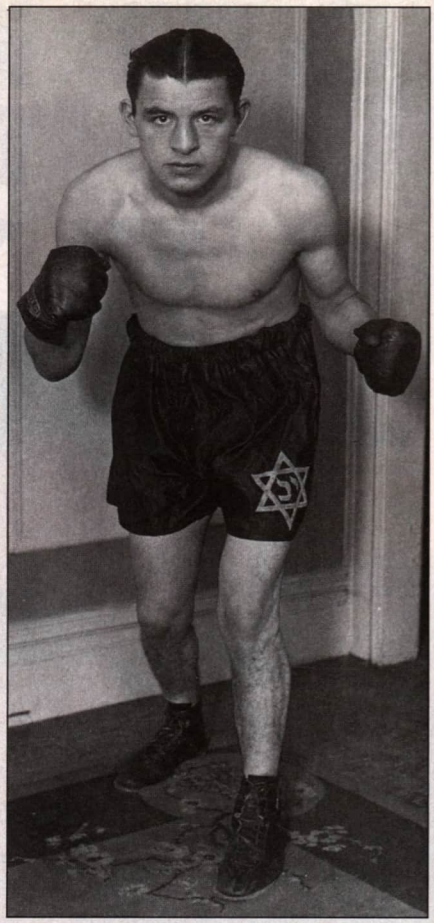
Of course, these generalizations weren't fair. The first wave of Brits to visit American shores, including Jimmy Wilde, Ted "Kid" Lewis, Jackie "Kid" Berg, Jock McAvoy, and Jem Driscoll, fought superbly. But starting in the late-1930s, there was a sense that American soil was not the best place for Brits to practice the Sweet Science.

Tommy Farr, "The Tonypandy Terror," was a highly regarded Welsh heavyweight when promoter Mike Jacobs brought him to New York to be new heavyweight champion Joe Louis' first challenger. Farr lost by 15-round decision, but he impressed the New Yorkers so much that he was brought back four more times. He lost every time, to Jim Braddock, Max Baer, Lou Nova, and Red Burman. Farr never fought in America again. Years later, Randy Turpin and Don Cockell continued the drift of Brits flopping in America.

"If you hear a sound of breaking china," wrote one New York editor, "it wasn't Cockell's tea set. It was his chin." Brits had become the favorite whipping boys of bored boxing writers.

Sir Henry Cooper, one of England's most beloved fighters, simply refused to fight in the U.S.

"A lot of people believe that in America there are millions of dollars to be earned, but it's a misconception," Cooper wrote in his autobiography, explaining that American promoters weren't willing to pay him what he could earn in England. Indeed, American boxing was in decline during Cooper's heyday, but by the 1970s, another era of U.K. fighters were on their way to America. Results would be mixed.



Englishman Jackie "Kid" Berg, who began his U.S. campaign in 1928, went on to beat such outstanding American fighters as Tony Canzoneri, Billy Petrolle, Mushy Callahan, and Bruce Flowers. He also beat Panama's legendary "Kid Chocolate" in New York City.

For instance, Scotland's Ken Buchanan posted a great 5-1 record in New York, beating the likes of Ismael Laguna and Carlos Ortiz. Buchanan's only loss in America was to Roberto Duran.

Joe Bugner came to America in 1973 to fight Muhammad Ali. Bugner was never a favorite of the U.K. press. "He's built like a Greek statue, but with fewer moves," wrote Hugh McIlvanney. Ali won by decision, but Bugner was proud of himself. As he told author Stephen Brunt for the book, *Facing Ali*, "It meant more money in the bank." Bugner's American record was a meager 2-4, but he main-

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Khan won every round en route to a TKO of Malignaggi. It was an impressive performance, but the light-punching New Yorker was the perfect foil for the Englishman with a questionable chin.

tained his American fights made him more popular with the U.K. writers. "From that moment on, the press was more on my side," Bugner said.

It was Tony Sibson's bad luck to become a middleweight contender at the time "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler was champion. Hagler wouldn't fight in the U.K. (after thrashing Alan Minter at Wembley Arena for the title, he was pelted by bottles), so it was up to "Sibbo" to come to America. Hagler trounced him in six rounds. (Another British middleweight, Kevin Finnegan, came to America twice to face Hagler and was stopped both times.)

Even worse luck was awaiting Britain's Frank Bruno, who made his American debut in 1989 against heavyweight champion Mike Tyson. Bruno succumbed to Tyson in the fifth. In 1996, Bruno came back to face Tyson a second time and was stopped in three. But even if Bruno inspired *Sports Illustrated*'s Pat Putnam to call him "another in a long line of lumbering British giants with Wedgewood chins," a new generation of Brits was already shaking things up.

British heavyweight Don Cockell arrives in New York aboard the S.S. United States for his 1954 bout with Harry Matthews, who the Englishman stopped in the seventh round. It wasn't until Cockell returned the next year to challenge heavyweight champ Rocky Marciano that he needed the life-preserver.

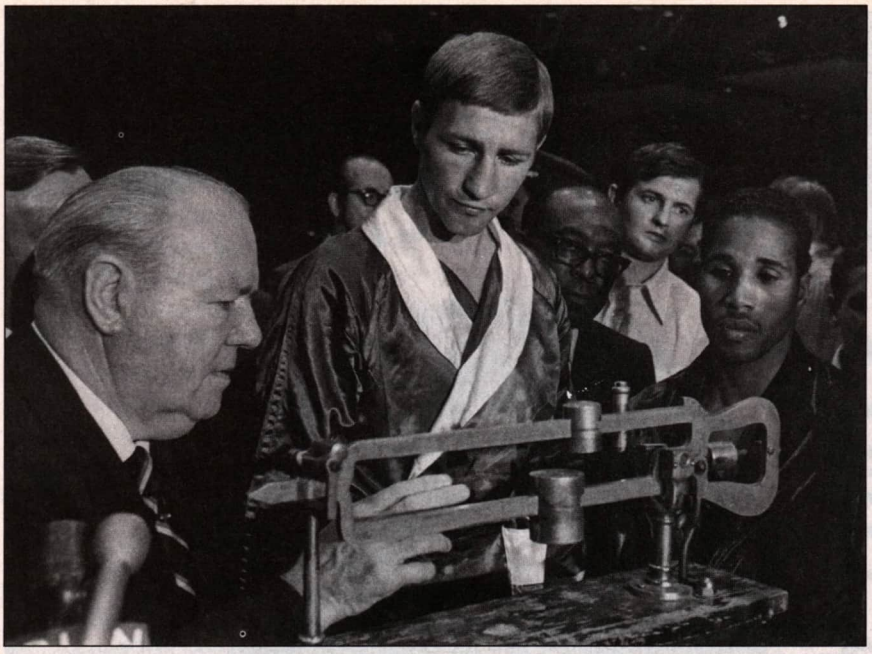
A Jamaican by way of London, Lloyd Honeyghan's stoppage of the highly touted Donald Curry in Atlantic City won him the WBA, WBC, and IBF welterweight titles and was THE RING's 1986 Upset of the Year.

Nigel Benn enjoyed a 5-0 run in America, culminating with a one-round blowout of Iran Barkley. Like Cooper, Benn could make more money in the U.K. than he could in the U.S. and focused solely on U.K. bouts after beating Barkley. Soon, though, fighters from all corners of the U.K. were invading America, with better luck than ever before.

"Prince" Naseem Hamed's 1997 American debut was either a mess or a success, depending on how you viewed his Madison Square Garden potboiler against Kevin Kelley. Hamed, "The Sheffield Banging Machine," was dropped three times before he put Kelley away in the fourth round. Hamed fought thrice more in the States, before meeting his Waterloo in Las Vegas at the hands of Barrera in 2001. Well, at least he was fun for a while.

Another British featherweight, Paul Ingle, came off the canvas to score an 11th round kayo of Junior Jones in Madison Square Garden in 2000. Ingle retired a year later due to injuries, but "The Yorkshire Hunter" retired with a perfect 1-0 record stateside. Danny Williams, "The Brixton Bomber," had a memorable American debut, stopping a decrepit Tyson in 2004.

Of course, there were still Brits who stumbled whenever they fought in the States, but the old harshness from the press was gradually dissolving, thanks to a new generation of writers that were less biased, and perhaps, also, to the achievements of Lennox Lewis. Of course, Lewis had his critics, such as the late Budd Schulberg, who described Lewis as "curiously and annoyingly lacking in fistic passion." But Lewis fought more often in America than any Brit since the days of Berg. Hearing his accent on HBO, seeing the Union Jack



Lightweight champion Ken Buchanan weighs in for a rematch with Ismael Laguna (far right), the man he won the 135-pound title from in Puerto Rico. The Scotsman beat Laguna again and eventually went 5-1 in his U.S. bouts, losing only to Roberto Duran.

unfurled at his fights, became a regular occurrence. Because of Lewis, contemporary American boxing fans grew up with the idea that a Brit could dominate a division and consistently beat American fighters, something unheard of in previous eras.

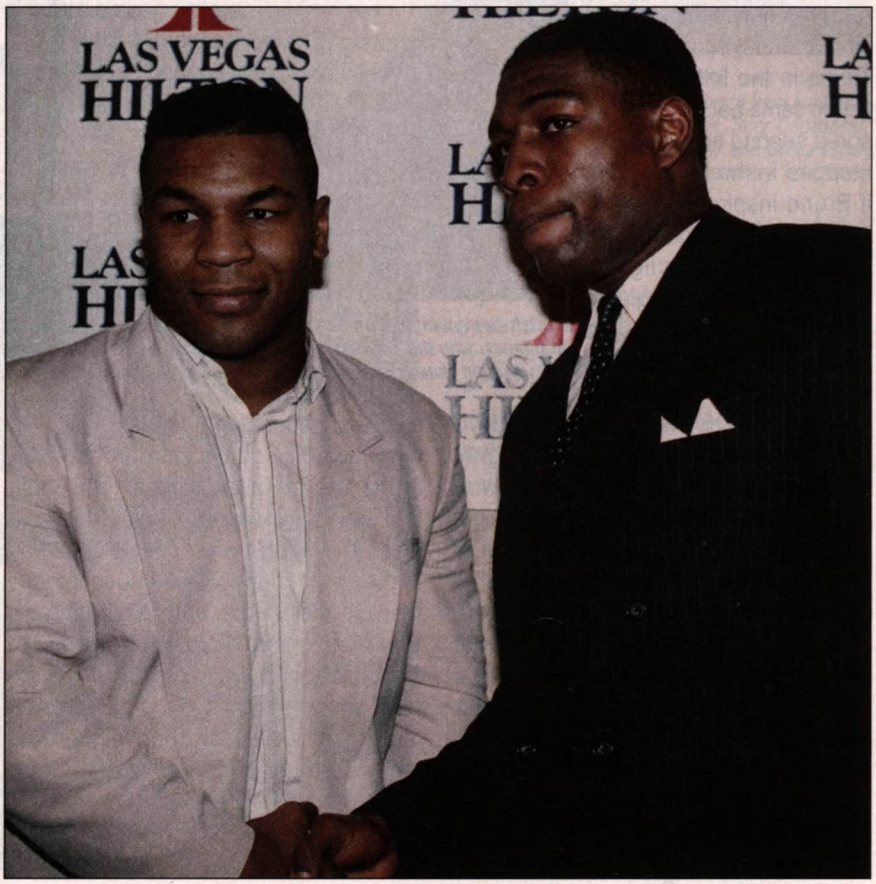
Lewis started early in America. His second pro fight, in fact, was a two-round kayo of journeyman Bruce Johnson in Atlantic City in 1989. Lewis, never completely embraced by British fans because he'd lived much of his early life in Canada, fought in the U.S. almost exclusively from 1993 until his final bout in 2003. Fighting the best of his era, Lewis was undefeated in 22 American fights.

Unlike Lewis, Joe Calzaghe's American debut came late in his career. One wonders how Calzaghe's career would've turned out if he'd come to the U.S. earlier.

Ricky Hatton stormed America with the goal of fighting Floyd Mayweather. Had Mayweather not existed, Hatton might've stayed in the U.K., filling up Manchester sports arenas and making good money. But rather than play it safe, the "Hitman" worked his way through a series of American fights, eventually landing a bout with Mayweather. He lost. Then he fought Manny Pacquiao. He lost again. The losses were humiliating, but Hatton earned the kind of money he wouldn't have seen had he stayed home. Hatton recently had some career advice for Khan regarding America.

"I am sure Amir will want to fight in Las Vegas—it is a tremendous buzz seeing your name in lights on the famous strip—however, my advice would be to have a big fight in England this summer. Of all the great nights I have had, fighting in front of 58,000 people at the City of Manchester Stadium a couple of years ago is something I'm immensely proud of and will always have a special place in my heart," Hatton said in the *Manchester Evening News*.

Khan's win over Malignaggi was impressive, but there were murmurs along press row that Khan remains an imperfect fighter, still vulnerable, and that the smaller, soft-hitting Malignaggi had been a perfect foil. In fact, Khan's penchant for being dropped in his earlier fights, and his loss to Prescott, coupled with Malignaggi's brittle hands, caused one wag to label this fight "The Glass Chin Versus The Glass Fist." After the bout, Khan credited Malignaggi for his toughness and then gave due credit to trainer Freddie Roach for devising a battle plan. Khan, the WBA junior welterweight beltholder, also gave the proper-sounding speech about-facing the other 140-pound titlists, Devon



Frank Bruno shakes hands with Mike Tyson prior to their 1989 heavyweight title fight, which the Englishman lost via fifth-round TKO. Bruno's failure served to confirm the old cliché about Britain's horizontal heavyweights.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Lennox Lewis helped change the perception of English heavyweights by going undefeated in the U.S. His eighth-round knockout of Mike Tyson in 2002 cemented his legacy as one of, if not the best, British fighter of all-time. All told, Lewis won 22 fights in the United States.

Alexander and Tim Bradley. Marcos Maidana was also mentioned, an idea shot down by Khan, who has a distinct plan for his American experience.

"I want to get the feel of it first and build it up and make my name worth more," Khan told boxingscene.com prior to the fight. "This is a business. If I fight Maidana in a few fights time, then we'll both have more recognition in the States. We'll have built it up a bit more, and it will be a bigger fight."

As patchy as he may be, Khan could be successful at 140. It's his good fortune that there isn't a Hagler or Tyson in the bunch. If bouts with the other titlists can't be made, there are some other opponents for Khan that could work in the meantime. For instance, Richard Schaefer of Golden Boy Promotions has already mentioned the possibility of Khan facing the winner of July's Juan Manual Marquez-Juan Diaz rematch.

Another possibility would be Prescott. He doesn't have Marquez' name value, but his knockout win over Khan will hang over Khan's head for as long as both fighters remain active. Prescott defeated journeyman Jason Davis on the undercard of Khan-Malignaggi. It didn't prove much, but it snapped a two-fight losing streak. If Khan can't beat Prescott, he doesn't deserve our Yankee dollars.

Meanwhile, as Khan was dismantling Malignaggi in New York, Michael Katsidis kayoed England's Kevin Mitchell in Upton Park, violently insinuating himself into the scheme of things.

"Katsidis is always an exciting fighter who can really rock the house," Schaefer said to *The Guardian*, hinting that Katsidis would be Khan's next opponent, with a London setting. "After that, he'll come back to the States, but we'll have to discuss opponents."

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Naseem Hamed had a good run in the United States, but also suffered his lone career defeat there, when Marco Antonio Berrera thrashed him in their April 2001 fight in Las Vegas.

THE WAMU WIPEOUT

The fight ended at 1:25 of the 11th, with referee Steve Smoger holding Paulie Malignaggi against the ropes, cradling the fighter's head in the crook of his arm. Malignaggi looked toward the ceiling, anything to avert his eyes from the calamity that was taking place. Known for emotional outbursts, Malignaggi seemed annoyed at first, then wistful. He probably realized that a certain part of his career was ending with a loss to Amir Khan.

Malignaggi may come back. He's an optimistic 29-year-old with no end of confidence in himself. He's the kind of guy who watches film of Sugar Ray Robinson and spots flaws. Even after losing three of his last nine fights, Malignaggi still harbored dreams of greatness. Unfortunately, nature designed Malignaggi with an abundance of chutzpah and a sorry lack of punching power. He also thinks he's much taller and quicker than he really is—he kept pulling away from Khan to avoid punches, but at 5'8½" he couldn't get out of the 5'10" Khan's range. It was a daredevil strategy that would prove disastrous.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Ref Smoger rescues Malignaggi in the 11th round

Still, things didn't start out so badly. Khan, 23-1 (17), Bolton, Lancashire, was obviously quicker and more poised, but Malignaggi, 27-4 (5), Brooklyn, New York, matched Khan blow for blow during the bout's opening minutes. By the end of the first round, Malignaggi's fanatical supporters were waving Italian flags and chanting, "Paulie! Paulie!"

The crowd remained raucous throughout the next few rounds, but the fevered pitch at The WAMU Theater began to capsize during the sixth as fights broke out all around the place. At one point a ferocious fat man who looked like Tony Soprano seemed to rise up out of the crowd swinging his fists. Security rushed into the fray to subdue him, but he broke loose and charged into the crowd again. Then he was gone, swallowed up by the mob. The whole scene felt like a shark sighting in a vast, angry ocean.

The hostility in the stands may have been in reaction to the fact that the hometown boy was losing. Even as his corner implored him to throw a right hand over Khan's lunging left jab, Malignaggi could do nothing. Khan, 139½, won every round, spearing Malignaggi with lefts and long rights, causing sweat to fly from Malignaggi's porcupine haircut. By the seventh, Malignaggi's face was reddened and his left eye bloody. His corner tried to stop the fight after the 10th, but Malignaggi tiredly insisted on one more round. Malignaggi, 139, moved out for the 11th, only to take another barrage of punches before the fight was stopped.

When Malignaggi was asked about his future, he said, "I've got to sit down and talk to my team. I don't want to fight to be a punching bag."

The night belonged to Khan, but the crowd was Malignaggi's. His supporters screamed themselves hoarse even as his boxing dreams were being shredded. The Italian flags, though, had stopped waving long before the end.

—D.S.

Ah, back to the States.

Aside from a certain pair of Ukrainian heavyweights, most fighters from overseas still seek the type of riches and prestige that can only come from fighting in America. For that, we should be happy and flattered. America may not be the boxing Mecca it used to be, but it still possesses a unique mythology that grabs outsiders. Money is still the main factor, but in more symbolic terms, as German author Gunter Grass once said, America is "the land where people find whatever they have lost."

Perhaps by fighting in America, Amir Khan can find what he lost at the heavy hands of Breidis Prescott. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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ONE DOOR CLOSES ...

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Referee Raul Caiz Jr. mercifully rescues Vazquez in the third round, ending the memorable four-fight series between Vazquez and Marquez (above). In the other televised fight, however, Mares and Perez fought to a sizzling draw (opposite page) that could very well be the start of another classic rivalry.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

ANOTHER OPENS

Is Mares-Perez The New Marquez-Vazquez?

By Ivan Goldman

The bad news? The magnificent Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez series apparently drew to a close after four matches. The good news? Another great series may have been born—same night, same place. When two terrifically talented, superbly conditioned fighters put on 12 aggressive rounds of back-and-forth fireworks all the way to the final bell, fans just naturally want to see them do it again. And as bantamweights Yonnhy Perez and Abner Mares huddle with their respective teams and map out their futures, they'll have a hard time arguing with destiny, which will present itself in the form of bigger financial inducements for at least one sequel to their electrifying majority draw contest.

But boxing is never neat, and even if the Perez and Mares teams put together another match without much fuss, the Vazquez-Marquez series won't necessarily let history tie it into a neat package with a pretty red bow on top. Both fighters were already signaling their hunger for a tie-breaking fifth fight that had even their promoters shaking their heads.

Although the visually tender tissue around Vazquez' eyes looked like it might begin hemorrhaging before he began his ring walk, although he was blinded and helpless before the end of three rounds, necessitating an early stoppage, and although he barely resembled the sharp puncher he once was, he and Marquez signaled their willingness to do it again. Even if managers, promoters, and trainers all walk away, there's always a new set of people available to tell them the lies they want to hear. Vazquez, 32, clearly suffers from a common ailment among used-up fighters—failure to notice their worsening performances. Fighters almost always

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Vazquez takes a knee in the third round. By then, he had already suffered horrific cuts over both eyes, which his cutman admitted would have been impossible to close between rounds.

deteriorate gradually, like oblivious frogs sitting in a pan of water that's brought to a slow boil.

So even though Marquez, 39-5 (35), and Vazquez, 44-5 (32), are hungry for more glory and more money, and even though they deserve it, the physical facts and rhythms of time pointed toward the logic of at least one and possibly two retirements. The Showtime poll showing definite fan interest in a fifth match was taken before Vazquez' left eyelid exploded in living color.

Most of the prefight articles on the fourth match seemed to center on whether, given that their styles matched like nitro and glycerin, the bout should even take place. It's not uncommon for fighters to hang up their gloves after one eye surgery. Vazquez endured three on the same eye after his third war with Marquez, the only one that lasted 12 punishing rounds. When that one was over THE RING reported that the two fighters "looked like they'd been hit by the same bus."

Number Three was so brutal that it stirred up plenty of speculation about just

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

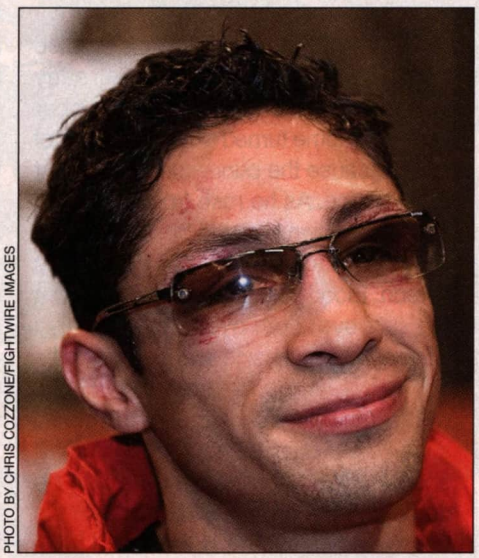
Marquez rejoices following his third-round TKO of Vazquez, which evened their series at 2-2. Although he obviously has more left than Vazquez, it's questionable how well the 35-year-old Mexican will fare against the young studs of the featherweight division.

Thank You, Izzy

Israel "Magnifico" Vazquez is a fighter who never looked for a soft touch. To avoid an opponent because he thought the man might beat him was alien to his thought process. He jumped at the chance to fight Marquez, who was considered one of the hardest punchers in boxing, pound-for-pound, and sure enough, when Marquez stopped him in the seventh round of their first fight, Vazquez' nose was smashed and ruined. It would require complex surgery to reopen the passageways.

Afterward armchair know-it-alls denigrated him for quitting, but he knew if he couldn't breathe properly he stood no chance against a hitter like Marquez, and when he shook his head to signal it was over, he knew then he was only doing what it took to remain a prizefighter and try Marquez on another night. Sure enough, he won their next two, losing plenty more blood in the process.

Vazquez was never a Shane Mosley or a Floyd Mayweather with natural blinding speed and perfect timing. He had to work extraordinarily hard to be competitive at the top level. It was his indomitable will that enabled him to compete on an even basis with any man in his weight class. Like the late, great Diego Corrales, going to war was part of his fight plan, and if his opponent felt differently, Vazquez would own him before long.



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Vazquez: Truly "Magnifico"

But he was no plodder either. He threw crisp combinations, the right ones at the right time, and he worked hard on his defense, but eventually he would shove that aside and attack, again and again until, more often than not, his hand was raised in victory.

Before his four Marquez contests, Vazquez had engaged in other memorable battles with Oscar Larios, Jhonny Gonzalez, and others. After he decisioned journeyman Justo Almazan in 2002, a fight he took after losing his first fight with Larios, Vazquez, never traveled an easy road again. He preferred to prove himself on steep, rocky trails.

—I.G.

how much savagery we should expect fighters to take. It didn't seem possible for the two warriors to sustain such damage without suffering some kind of lasting effects. Then when Vazquez took a tune-up last October against Angel Priolo, it unexpectedly turned into a war that could have been anybody's fight. Vazquez got hit with way too many shots for a world-class fighter before he finally stopped Priolo in the ninth round of a 10-rounder.

As Marquez, 35, showed again in Fight Four, when you add up all the data, he's the superior fighter. But apparently Vazquez never studied the chart, so after losing their first fight he won the next two in what most likely was the greatest trilogy in history.

When Marquez and Vazquez get together there are no clinches, the punches come in bunches, and few of those punches go unanswered. There are almost no steps back, and when they do occur you can assume the retreating fighter is terribly hurt yet preparing to launch a new attack.

The fourth fight, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, had four promotional companies soaking up shares of the dollars. To his credit, Oscar De La Hoya, the CEO of one of them, Golden Boy, declared, "That's the way it should end. We witnessed history."

Oscar knew as well as anyone what the catastrophically damaged flesh around Vazquez' left eye meant in terms of future fights. Before it was stitched up, the wound looked like something a Hollywood special-effects specialist would try to create for a slasher film.

"You could see to the bone," said Vazquez' respected cutman Miguel Diaz. "We

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Class personified: Marquez consoles Vazquez after the fight. Despite their fierce rivalry between the ropes, both men have always shown total respect for each other.

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can't stop cuts like that with the materials we have in the corner."

Gary Shaw, another one of the promoters, said flatly, "I don't want to see a fifth fight."

Mexican promoter Fernando Beltran, part of the Marquez team, said generously, "There was no loser tonight. We only tied the score."

To those who were deeply concerned about the physical damage already sustained by the two fighters, Number Four's outcome turned out to be a kind of relief because the punishment didn't last the distance. As he rose from the fight's only knockdown in round three, Vazquez' body language was that of a sightless person. Blood spilled down his face from the cuts over both eyes. Referee Raul Caiz Jr. had no choice and waved it off.

Pat Russell, who refereed Fight Three, which Vazquez won in a squeaker, said after Fight Four that Vazquez "has had enough. For him to continue would be damaging for him and for boxing. He is truly a warrior, but this is the time. I have too much respect for his heart and ability and raw courage to watch him be wasted on another payday."

The first three fights were remarkable in many ways. They were fought in a period of only 12 months, beginning in March 2007, without intervening tune-ups. They provided us with two Fights of the Year and two Rounds of the Year. Yet the two decent, soft-spoken men never broke across media barriers to become known outside the boxing world, which is, in a sense, also remarkable. Their fourth show drew 9,236 fans, a respectable but not spectacular crowd considering the circumstances surrounding it. Neither earned a purse above six figures.

Certainly it would have helped their cause if the two Mexican natives had learned English, but probably not that much. They were, after all, only junior featherweights (competing as featherweights in Fight Four).

Marquez appeared to have much of his skill intact, at least for three rounds, but he campaigned for most of his career as a bantamweight, eight pounds south, and even though he has one of

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Perez rocks Mares with a left hand. The IBF bantamweight titleholder attacked from the opening bell and never stopped engaging throughout the sizzling 12-rounder.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mares rallied late, when he was especially effective with uppercuts on the inside. The Mexican-American just might be a star in the making.

the meanest punches in the business, it might not be particularly good for his health to compete at age 35 against hungry youngsters like Yuriorkis Gamboa and Juan Manuel Lopez.

The way their styles matched up, the fact that Mares-Perez turned out to be a possible successor to the revered Vazquez-Marquez series didn't come as a complete surprise. In fact, Doug Fischer of RingTV.com actually said he'd be "surprised" if the co-feature didn't turn out to be the Fight of the Year.

Shaw, who promotes both Marquez and Perez, called the bout with Mares "a trilogy in the making." Perez had a challenge from Vic Darchinyan on his mind, but minds can change fast in this business. Shaw, who promotes Darchinyan too, didn't seem eager at this point to place his two bantams into the same ring.

Native Colombian Perez, 20-0-1 (14), and Mares, 20-0-1 (13), are both hungry, punishing fighters who use angles to batter their opponents with sustained assaults employing a variety of combinations. Perez, as always, showed plenty of stamina, and yet Mares, who began using the ring around the fifth round, had more left for the championship rounds. Basically, Mares wanted to fight most of the time, Perez *all* the time.

Throughout the contest both men were able to absorb horrific punches and come right back in a millisecond. Like the first three bouts of the Vazquez-Marquez series, this was brutal but exquisite prizefighting.

When Mares started using the ring and refusing to stand in front of his man every second, some observers gave credit to Perez for pouring on pressure. Others, including THE RING, noted that Mares was *sticking* and moving, not just moving, and saw his strategy as intelligent and effective. That probably explains the differences in scores. When you want to create a series, a little bit of controversy can be a good thing. Anyway, THE RING saw it 115-114, Mares. Judge Marty Denkin scored it 115-113 Mares, and Eugenia Williams and Gwen Adair both scored it 114-114.

Mares, who's only 24, would seem to have a brighter future than Perez, who's seven years further along and hails from Colombia, not a box-office help. And although fans love to watch fighters who have a style like Perez', fighters like him don't generally last as long as more defensively minded competitors.

Mares, who was born in Mexico and grew up in the Los Angeles area, is a glib young man who converses easily in Spanish or English. Mexico is always looking for its next great boxing hero, and Mares, who competed on its 2004 Olympic team, might be a candidate. But Mexican purists might find him too American for their taste. De La Hoya speaks Spanish too, but he never caught on south of the border.

Mares, Perez, Vazquez, and Marquez competing back to back the same night was a reminder that even as we honor brave young lions growing older, slower, and less potent, there are always younger lions set to take their place. Boxing, after all, is a reflection of life itself—cruel but beautiful. ■

Ivan Goldman, THE RING's West Coast correspondent, was ringside at the Staples Center for Marquez-Vazquez IV.

PHOTO BY HECTOR VIVAS/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

FERNANDO MONTIEL

The New King Of Los Mochis

By David Mayo

The coastal city of Los Mochis, in the Mexican state of Sinaloa, is known for many things, including its searing heat and rich land. The city's founder became fabulously wealthy through production of sugar cane, which remains a principal product of the vast farming region. But these days, nothing produced from the fertile soil of Los Mochis surpasses the sweetness of its professional boxers.

Fernando Montiel grew up there, and his father instructed most of the city's A-list of boxers at one time or another, including four who lay claim to current world titles, an extraordinary feat for a city of some 260,000 people, even in this alphabetized era of watered-down titles.

Montiel left the heat and the fertile land twice to train for fights, suffered his only two professional losses in those bouts, and vowed never to train elsewhere again. And with the array of sparring and hometown training opportunities available to him at the Cochul Montiel School of Boxing—the gym owned and operated by his father, Manuel Sr.—why would he?

Ricardo Jimenez, the well-known Top Rank boxing publicist, only had heard the legend of Los Mochis and its boxing exports before he began working with Montiel. As he looked around the gym, even he expressed amazement at the array of tribute photos to homegrown fighters who came through the little facility.

"Let me put it this way: Any fighter from Los Cochis has come through this gym at one time or another," Jimenez said. "Any fighter who came out of Los Mochis started here."

Jorge Arce, the 115-pound title claimant with whom Montiel's promoter is considering making an all-Los Mochis title matchup, lives in the city. So does another 115-pound title claimant and former RING magazine junior flyweight champion Hugo Cazares. Humberto Soto, the lightweight title claimant, was born and raised here too.

So it not only is difficult enough for Montiel to differentiate himself from the other fighters in the talent-rich 115-pound through 122-pound divisions, but also from those in his own hometown. But the WBA and WBO bantamweight titleholder and number-one ranked contender for THE RING's 118-pound championship vacancy has devised a plan for doing so: In short order, he intends to move up four more pounds, add a title claim in a fourth weight division during an illustrious, if overlooked, 14-year career, and put his footprints in the sand in a method none of the great Mexican fighters before him has.

"If they told me tomorrow 'That's it,' I'd be very happy with my career—three world championships and a lot of great fights in there," Montiel said. "But, to be honest with you, I'd like to get that fourth championship. No Mexican has ever won four championships in four different divisions, and I'd like the opportunity to do it. If I do get the opportunity, I think I can do it. I think I can win at 122 and get that world title. I still have a lot of hunger in me. I still know that I can do better, get bigger fights, bigger purses. Right now, I'm getting the biggest fights I've ever gotten, and I feel good. I feel like I can keep going for a few more years."

In truth, he knows nothing else.

His parents both worked for the local water company, and his mother still does, but boxing is the family business. Manuel Sr., in addition to operating the gym, taught boxing classes to college students. All three of Montiel's brothers, Manuel Jr., Eduardo, and Pedro, are members of his boxing team, and all boxed professionally, as did his father, with modest success.

Fernando Montiel, 31, started boxing in tournaments at age four or five, as he recalls. In the office at the Cochul Montiel School of Boxing—"Cochul" was a nickname for Manuel Sr., applied by one of his sisters who couldn't pronounce his name as a youngster, and resulting in all his sons being nicknamed "Cochulito," or "Little Cochul"—a photograph dominates the wall, with young Fernando wearing boxing gloves nearly as big as his tiny body.

Like so many promising boxers in his area, Fernando turned professional young. He was 17 when he debuted with a knockout win in Los Mochis. Almost exactly four years later, with only a draw (later avenged) marring his 21-bout pro record, he fought Isidro Garcia for the WBO flyweight title. Even then, Montiel found himself shrouded in self-doubt, never having fought outside Mexico and was curious whether he belonged at that level.

"I didn't really think anything validated my career until I won my first world championship," he said. "That's when I knew I really was something in boxing. Before that, I was winning fights, but to me, winning that first world championship validated what I was brought up to do. So to me, it was just getting to that point, winning a championship. I knew I could do it. That was my goal, that's what I wanted to do, I wanted to become one of the best fighters in the world."

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Montiel is pictured with Humberto Soto (left) at a "Latin Fury" press conference. Both boxers are from Los Mochis, a city in the Mexican state of Sinaloa that has produced an inordinate number of outstanding fighters.

Montiel beat Garcia by seventh-round TKO, then reached the same conclusion against Zoltan Lunka in the first of his three title defenses, which also marked his first fight outside Mexico and the first of several trips to a rival's home nation. He knocked out Lunka in Germany. He won a decision from Z Gorres in the Philippines. And in his most recent fight, April 30, at Tokyo's famous Budokan Hall, he iced favored Hozumi Hasegawa with a devastating display of fourth-round power that put the WBC title belt around Montiel's waist and left the ex-champion facing surgery for a broken jaw.

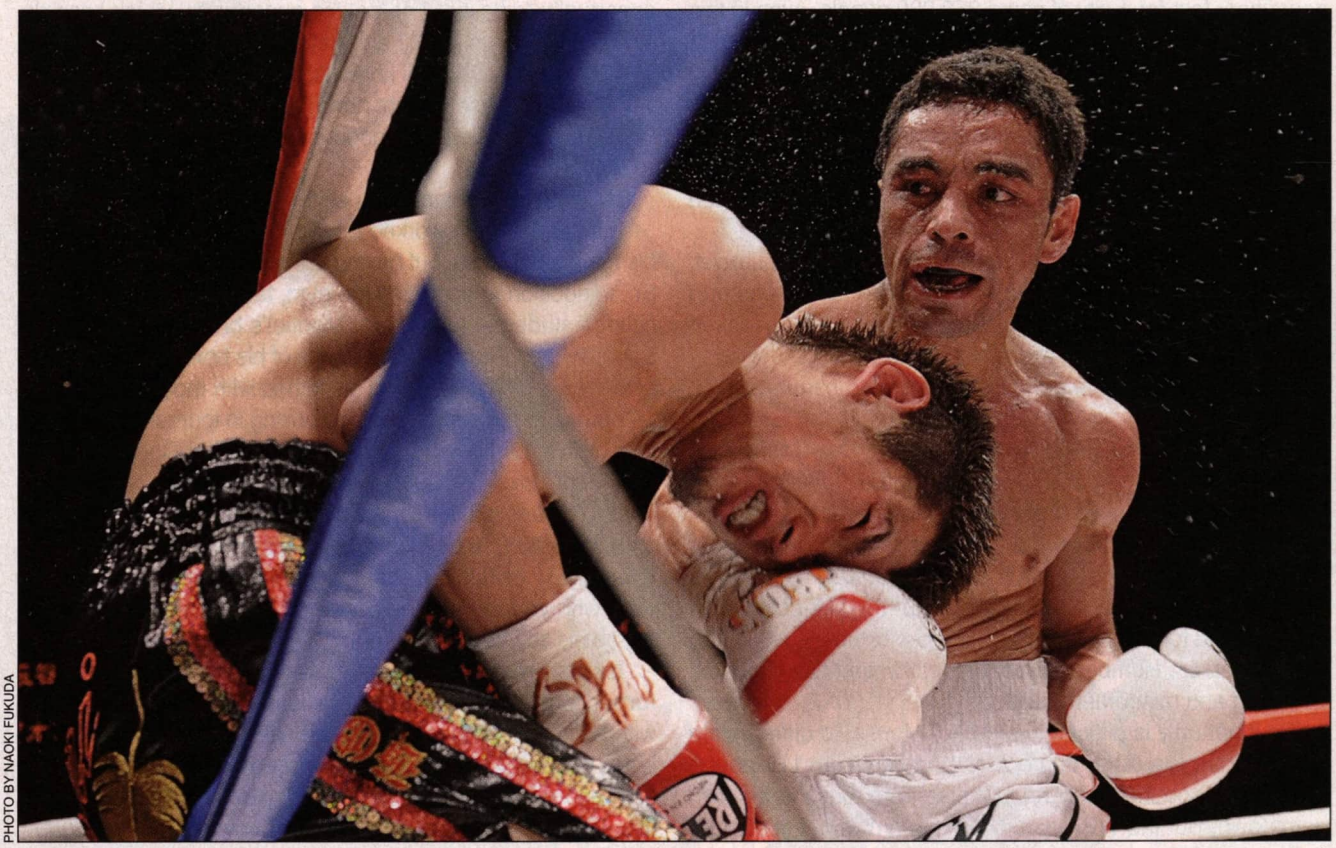
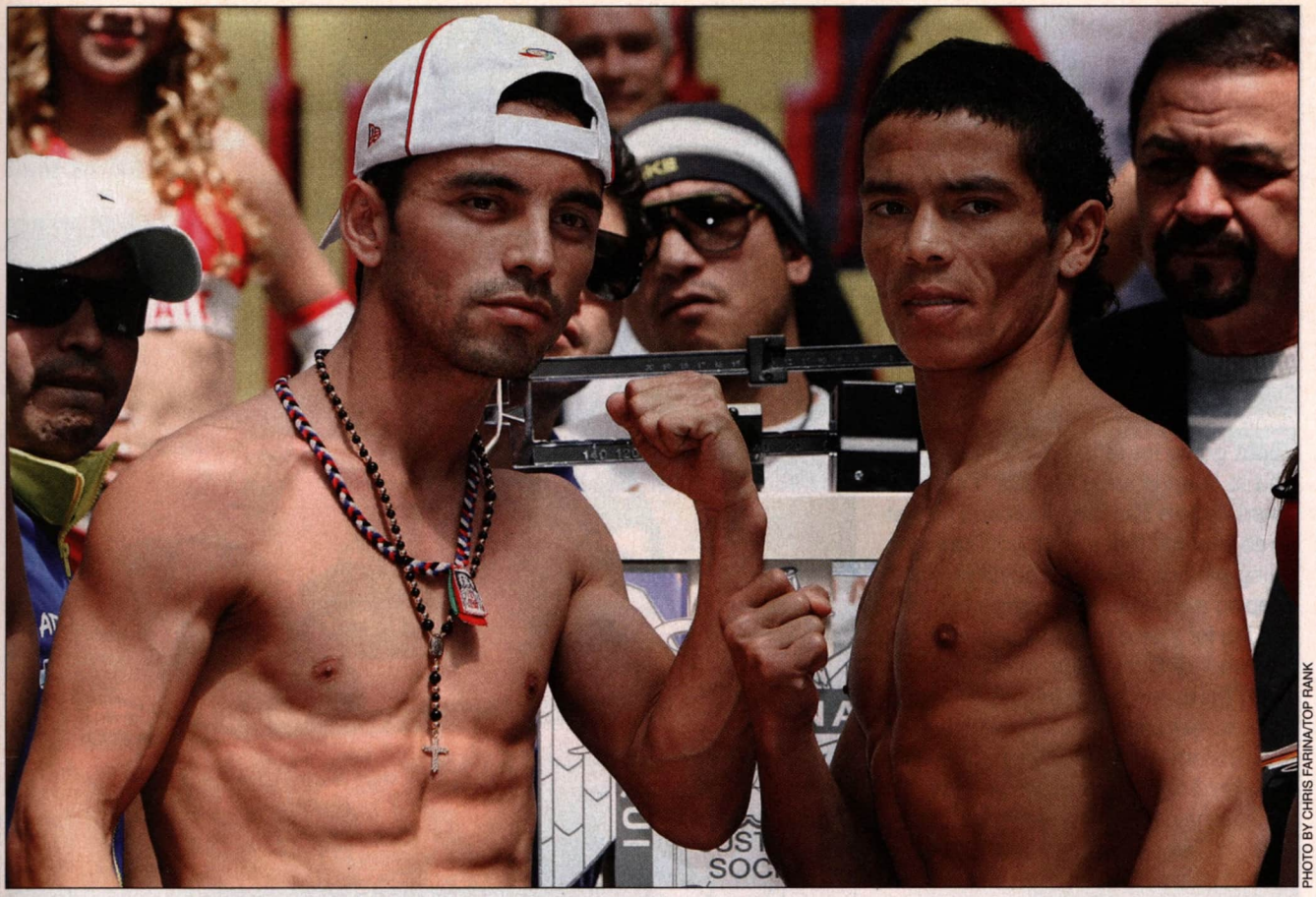


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Montiel has won a lot of fights since turning pro in December 1996, but his recent TKO of Hozumi Hasegawa in Tokyo, Japan, was the biggest victory of his stellar career. The win earned the Mexican the WBC bantamweight strap and the number-one spot in The Ring's 118-pound rankings.



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Although Montiel has fought in the United States, Japan, Germany, and the Philippines, most of his bouts have been in his native Mexico, including his 2009 bout with Diego Silva in Tijuana. Montiel prevailed via third-round knockout.

For all the success, there also was the one notable tragedy.

On June 22, 2002, Montiel won the WBO super flyweight title from Panama's Pedro Alcazar. It was a huge moment, his first fight in Las Vegas, on the undercard of Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales II at MGM Grand. It produced the lifetime of memories one might expect, for all the wrong reasons. Montiel dominated the fight and won by a sixth-round TKO. All seemed fine. But the next day, Alcazar began feeling woozy while sightseeing on the Las Vegas Strip. Two days after the fight, he succumbed to the swelling of his brain and died.

Montiel, who did not attend the funeral and said he never has had any exchange with Alcazar's family, did not fight for about six months after that tragedy. At that stage of his career, the unplanned layoff was substantial but beneficial, he said, "because I wasn't going to be able to get back in the ring so quickly after that. As a boxer, that's always talked about, that that could happen. That's always in the back of your head, that someone could lose their life doing this. When I was told about it, it really hit me hard, but I was able to get over it, not think too much about it. Those things happen in boxing. They're not good things. But I was able to get over it."

The 31-year-old Montiel, 41-2-2 (31), took his first loss in his 29th fight, on a 2003 majority decision to longtime flyweight and super flyweight star Mark Johnson. He regained the WBO 115-pound title two years later, then in 2006 lost a bantamweight title bid on a split decision to Jhonny Gonzalez. Given the opportunity to claim victory and bemoan undeserved defeat, he refuses, other than to say it was a mistake to leave Los Mochis to train in Big Bear City, California (Johnson) and Mexico City (Gonzalez).

"Now, I look back on those fights and think if I would have done something a little extra, if I would have tried a little harder, maybe I could have won those fights more clearly," said Montiel, whose only other non-win came via technical draw. "They would have been big wins for me. I think I needed those fights in order to become what I wanted to be. I couldn't just fight my fight. I had to do something a little extra, and I learned you have to always find something more in your heart."

Montiel is on a 10-fight unbeaten streak, including a fourth-round knockout of Martin Castillo, the former Mexican Olympian and 115-pound titleholder, in 2008. He has competed in title fights 18 times, if one can overlook that virtually all of them were for the lightly regarded WBO. Nevertheless, those bouts have made him a veteran of the 12-round distance and included fights against the best his division can offer.

None was bigger than the latest one, when he lost the early rounds to Hasegawa then stunned a crowd of almost 15,000 with a six-second barrage which added the WBC title to his mantle.

With seven seconds left in the fourth round of a tactical fight, Montiel ripped

Hasegawa with a left hook. When the Japanese star slumped into the ropes, Montiel leaped in with a follow-up left hook that snapped Hasegawa's head straight back, as part of a dozen unanswered punches that forced referee Laurence Cole to stop the fight with one second remaining in the round.

"As soon as I caught him, I said, *He's mine, he's done*. I just started throwing punches quickly so the referee would stop the fight, because he was done. As soon as he hit the ropes, I knew he was done," Montiel said. "What we talked about going into the fight was that we had to keep in mind that we had to be smart and we had to be patient. The first three rounds, that's what you saw: me being patient, not doing anything risky, keeping away from him, being intelligent, looking for where the holes were. I think that worked to my favor. I didn't want to go in there too early because I didn't want to get caught with anything. But once I started feeling him out, that was the plan. I think it worked to perfection."

Hasegawa, who had a 25-fight, nine-year win streak snapped in his 11th title defense, later was diagnosed with a broken jaw, which he claimed happened in the first round.

"Before I fought Hasegawa, people said he was the best 118-pounder in the world," Montiel said. "I beat him soundly, so I think I'm now the best at 118 pounds in the world. But I have to keep proving it. I don't mind fighting the other champions. I don't mind fighting the best challengers. I look forward to those challenges. I've been a champion for a long time. I think I've done a lot of things great in my career. But I think this win over Hasegawa took me to another level, and I want to stay at that level."

To keep him there, promoter Bob Arum expressed willingness to shelve some plans in favor of others. After initially planning to have Montiel fight Eric Morel, the victory over Hasegawa spurred the promoter to shift gears and focus on a Montiel-Nonito Donaire fight, a "huge Mexican-Filipino fight" that might go to the Philippines.

Morel, meantime, will fight Jorge Arce in June, while the once-beaten Donaire, who hasn't lost since 2001, has a fight scheduled in July.

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Letting it all hang out: When Montiel hurt Hasegawa with a crushing left hook in the fourth round (above), he wasted no time going for the finish, punching his Japanese foe into the ropes (opposite page) and firing a steady stream of blows that forced the referee to stop the fight.

Arum envisions Montiel not only winning a title at 122, but perhaps even a fifth title at featherweight.

"Rafael Marquez is a potential opponent that would be a really interesting fight," Arum said. "So would Juan Manuel Lopez or [Yuriorkis] Gamboa, who are virtually the same weight. They're 126. A lot of great 126 fighters, like those guys, and [Celestino] Caballero. So yeah, there are a lot of people in line to fight. Unfortunately, I think these guys are going to have to end up destroying each other."

The problem with the sub-featherweight classes is also its benefit to fans: Because Showtime and Fox Sports are the only television entities interested in them, "there's really no market for them in the United States, other than the market we create ourselves," Arum said—so they must fight each other and do so often.

Montiel, who has a young family with two children and a third on the way, said he has to keep fighting for breadwinning purposes. That isn't a problem, given the promise of so many potential big fights ahead and his passion for all aspects of a sport that he says is "a ritual, like a religion."

His dream fights, he said, are against Donaire and Vic Darchinyan.

"I'd definitely like to fight Darchinyan," he said. "He always talked very disrespectfully of me. He's never given me

PHOTO BY KOICHI KAMOSHIDA/GETTY IMAGES

my due. He never thought that I was anything in the fight game. He's never given me my respect. He always talks bad about Mexicans, and I want him to see what a Mexican can do to him. It's personal now. But I also know it's a big fight. It's a big-money fight, and there's a lot of interest in it, so it would serve a lot of purposes for me."

Montiel's victory over Hasegawa gave him another career-defining win and also granted him access to something he never enjoyed before, widespread consideration for the top 10 of the pound-for-pound ratings. This time, unlike before he won his first title, there is no self-doubt.

"I think the expectations of my fans have always been for me to do something like I just did in Japan, getting a big win," he said. "Everyone always said that's what I lacked in my career. I hope that satisfies a lot of naysayers about my career. Sometimes, those pound-for-pound lists don't really reflect the talents or the career that a fighter has had. I think I've earned it. If I'm put in one of those lists of the best pound-for-pounders in the world, the top 10, I think I've earned it, because of my consistency and my wins. I think I belong there." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

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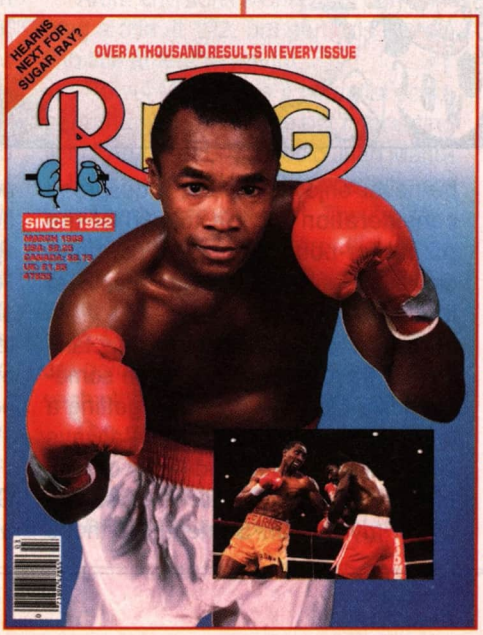

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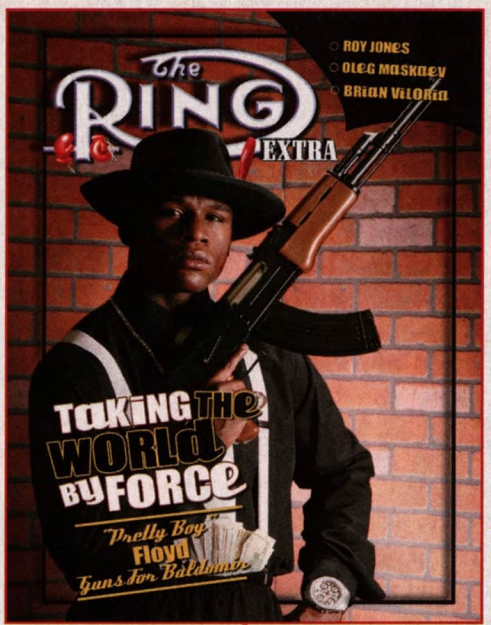

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Carl Froch

"After Watching A Replay, I Was Even More Convinced I Beat Kessler"

Carl Froch was already back in training three weeks after controversially losing his WBC title to Mikkel Kessler—even though his next "Super Six" bout was still four months off. The cut on his right brow and the perforated eardrum he sustained in sparring before the fight were almost healed, but his mood seemed more dour than usual.

Froch, 26-1 (20), clearly does not relish the status of ex-titleholder, although he has plenty else going on in his life to keep his mind off the subject. The big one is that his girlfriend, model Rachael Cordingley, was due to give birth to his first child seven weeks later—and he seemed absolutely delighted with the prospect.

The 32-year-old also shows pride in his thriving property business. He owns and rents out properties all over Nottingham and is now moving into property development. When we talked, he was busy with his own house—converting a loft and doing all sorts of other improvements. "I've nearly finished," he said. "I've just done £100,000 [$145,000] work and I do a lot of it myself, decorating, painting, flooring, joinery. There's loads I can do."

Even so, Froch made it clear that the time for home improvements and business was drawing to a close because that sole loss on his 27-fight record grates so much. He seems to think he now has his back to the wall and will let nothing get in the way of victory against Arthur Abraham in his next Super Six outing. "I'll be training even harder and longer," he told London-based RING contributor Gavin Evans, who spoke with Froch in mid-May. "The time will come when I have to stand there with him, and I'm not worried about that. I'm not worried about his power at all." Evans reports:

"What was clear from our hour-and-a-half together was that Froch's brand of absolute self-belief was undiminished by the Danish setback. He said that after Abraham, he hopes Kessler will join him in the knockout rounds of the Super Six.

"The next year will determine whether Froch fades from the scene as a Brit, isn't quite good enough for the elite, or whether he joins his perpetual rival Joe Calzaghe as a British boxing great. Either way, we can expect a white-knuckle ride."

The Ring: Let's start with the immediate future, your fight with Abraham, tentatively set for September. You said after the Kessler fight that if the Abraham fight is in Germany, you wouldn't fight. What about a neutral venue like Switzerland?

Carl Froch: No. I've made that quite clear. If they don't have it in the U.K. then it will end up in Canada or America, but we'll work together with the Sauerlands [Abraham's promoters]. They are reasonable people. We're negotiating trying to get it in Nottingham, as originally agreed. We could get 25 000 people and it will make sense for everybody, but it won't be fair anywhere in continental Europe. Everybody knows that if I go over to Europe I won't get a fair crack of the whip.

The Ring: The scoring of your fight against Mikkel Kessler must have reinforced that view. Most ringsiders made it close, one or two points either way. Having seen it again on screen, what's your view now?

CF: On the night I thought I'd won it, but it was close, one of those nights when you think, *Yeah, I've definitely done enough to retain my title.* Then, after watching a replay, I was even more convinced. I saw the punches I landed and the ones that didn't land on me. You can see this on the video. I was catching a lot of his rights with my right glove; I was also catching his left hooks, and I was rolling and dipping better than usual. I executed the defensive stuff me and Rob [McCracken, his trainer] had been working on in training very well, but the judges get carried away with the crowd. You got 10,000 Danes, and when he was marching forward chucking his shots, I was getting underneath them and making him miss and blocking a lot of them. But the crowd was going crazy, especially those at the back of the hall.

The Ring: The judging seemed curious, especially Roger Tilleman, who gave it to Kessler by six points.

CF: Yeah, it's almost an inside thing. They are almost working for the promoters who have agendas: They want Mikkel Kessler or Sven Ottke to win.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

The Ring: Are you suggesting they get wined and dined and this has an insidious influence?

CF: I think it's totally corrupt when a judge does that. They go into it knowing that every close round goes to Kessler, and if Froch wins a close round, they'll call it even. I definitely think there's an influence there.

The Ring: Another fight some felt had a hometown influence was your's with Andre Dirrell. Some American viewers felt he won. Isn't this comparable to your complaints about the Kessler result?

CF: No, it was totally different. For one thing, the American reports I read said he lost. He was too negative—running, holding, complaining. Getting a point deducted for holding showed what he was up to. Even if I'd traveled to Detroit or whatever and he'd done the same thing, I'd have deserved it. Sure, it was close, but he was running, looking to survive, letting the odd shot go. And as soon as I got to him in round five, he was holding, holding, holding. You can't win a title like that. Dirrell wasn't busy enough because he knew that if he were busier, he'd get caught. It was a case of me marching forward, trying to make the fight and him using his speed and skills in a negative way. That's why he did a good job with Arthur Abraham: He learnt from me that he had to engage. Dirrell conclusively outboxed Abraham for nine rounds, after which he tired a bit, and Abraham started getting to him. He knocked Dirrell down in round 10.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Froch finds Mikkel Kessler's chin with a left during their "Super Six" bout in Herning, Denmark. Although the Englishman lost a close decision to the Dane, Froch is confident he'll still come out on top in the 168-pound tournament.

The Ring: What makes you think you can do better against Abraham than Dirrell?

CF: With my reach and power, I can use my range effectively, and if he's going to stand there with his guard held high and give me his ribs, then that's a rack of ribs I'm going to be taking out. I'm going to be using a sharp jab and plenty of bodyshots, pretty much what Andre Dirrell did. But Dirrell burnt himself out a bit early, so I won't be doing that. But the guy's a middleweight coming up to super middle. Sure, he punches hard, but I don't see anything in Abraham at super middleweight that's ridiculously powerful. He knocked out Taylor, but I finished Taylor off, and I thought Taylor did enough to beat him for 11 rounds. I actually thought Howard Eastman did enough to beat him in 2005.

The Ring: Would you like to fight Kessler again?

CF: Absolutely. I know I beat him in Denmark and next time, it will be easier. It's like sometimes I spar with a new sparring partner on Monday, but by Wednesday I've got them totally worked out. He'll obviously think he has me sussed out, but I just know I can beat him. I feel I got the best of Kessler. He was fighting to regain a world title in his backyard, but I think that fight took a lot out of him. Kessler was hurt and looked really tired at the end. His face was swollen up. He was in a bad way and I thought that pretty much done him in. But in Denmark, I was guilty of giving him too much respect.

The Ring: What else did you do wrong?

CF: I flew in Wednesday, a 2½-hour flight on a private jet, which nearly crash landed, and then a long drive. Then it was off to the racetrack for a media event that had me driving around a track, and then press conferences and

In the first stage of the Super Six, Froch squeaked past Andre Dirrell with a close 12-round decision in Froch's hometown of Nottingham, England. He'd like to fight Arthur Abraham, his next Super Six foe, in Nottingham, but might have to settle for neutral territory.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

other appearances. And before you know it, you're weighing in on the Friday, exhausted.

The Ring: What was the impact of your ear infection?

CF: That was a real pain. It affected my balance. If I closed my eye and stood on one foot, which is a bit of a test, I fell over every time. I had no center of gravity. In fact, it took three weeks after the fight for that ear to heal up. It was a perforation of the left eardrum. I thought I'd be alright, but every time I got hit with silly shots, it would throw me off balance and I was unsure of myself. I also did my ear before the Jean Pascal fight, but that was three weeks before. This was one week. You get a puff of air down your ear hole and it blows the air down the drum and pops your bloody ear. I think I will have to get myself a head guard with sponges in the ears. So the ear was a problem, but I'm not going to tell you the reason I lost was because of my ear.

More of the problem was that I switched off mentally a week before the fight. I was ready to fly out on the Saturday and then the phone rang and the plane was canceled, so I relaxed at home and had a proper dinner and thought, *Okay it's not happening—it might be six weeks before it's rescheduled.* Then all of a sudden, four days later, they sent out a private jet, and I thought, *Oh, no, this is the last thing I need.* When I got in the ring, my sharp-

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ness was gone, and by round four, I knew I didn't feel myself. I was pushing my shots out. Usually, when I've got someone hurt, like I did with Kessler in round five, when they wobble, I jump on them and throw 15 heavy shots and force the issue, but I didn't feel I had that on the night. The sharpness was gone, so I won't be doing that again. I know where I fell short.

The Ring: You've had several other injuries in your professional career, but unlike, say, Joe Calzaghe, you always seem prepared to fight injured.

CF: I fought Henry Porras in my American debut in 2005. In round four, I threw a right and it landed on his elbow and I split the extensor mechanism and that was sore. So I just used my left and stopped him in the eighth. The hand was still troubling me three months later. I had a few scans and they found that I'd severely ruptured the tendon. It was a bad tear, which was why my knuckles were hurting so much, but I went ahead with the Matthew Barney fight, because I hate sitting around and holding my career up. It was very painful and I couldn't throw the right properly. After the fight, I had surgery on it.

I've also had sore elbows and have had to have cortisone injections in those. Then against Brian Magee in 2006, I threw a right hook on the side of the head and gave myself a Bennett's fracture—on the first metacarpal, attached to the thumb—but I knocked him out with an uppercut in the 11th. The break was horrific and they had to operate straight away. I also tore my anterior cruciate ligament in 2004, but I boxed with that for three years. Then in April 2007, when playing football [soccer], I twisted my knee and had to have the ligament reconstructed using my hamstring tendons. They said I'd be out for 18 months, but six months later, I boxed Robin Reid. I put him down in round two, but as he went down, he grabbed hold of my bad knee and twisted it. I knocked him out in the fourth, but my knee was badly inflamed and I was six weeks on crutches. Then when I fought Pascal I had that perforated eardrum and a cracked rib that was really painful, even to breathe. But with the adrenaline on the night, you get through. So I've had my fair share, but the last thing I want to do is pull out. I'm the sort of man who will fight with an injury.

The Ring: Let's go back 30 years. Tell me about your childhood. What kind of upbringing did you have, and how did you get into boxing?

CF: I come from a working-class family in Nottingham. My mum and dad split up when I was six-years old, so I stayed with my dad until I finished junior school—he was very strict—and I would spend the weekends with my mum. Then, when I was 11, I moved in with her, joining my two brothers. My dad used to box out of Morton Hall Borstal [a young offenders institute]. Both of his parents came to Nottingham from Poland after World War II. But my dad was a bad lad who'd rebelled, and my Polish grandfather used to bring him up with a fist of iron. Anyway, my dad had a bag hanging up in the garage, so I started to hit it at the age of seven, and as soon as I was 11 and old enough to compete, my dad took me to the local boxing club and I went on to box for England. My career high was two ABA championships and the bronze medal in the World Championships in Ireland in 2001. With a bit more experience and better cornermen I could have won gold. I had a Russian in the semi-finals and I was jabbing and moving, but I needed to put it onto him because I was falling behind. I had him out on his feet in the fourth round, but it was too late.

The Ring: Did you get into fights outside the ring as a kid?

CF: As a young lad at school, I had lots of scraps. When someone would push me or try to take my crisps [potato chips], I used to have a go, and because I used to punch my dad's bag in the garage, I knew how to throw a punch. But when I reached senior school, I was so small and a late developer. I was about 5'2" and very skinny—always the smallest in my class until I was 16 and the youngest too. So I thought, *You know what? I'm not picking any fights.* I had the gift of the gab and used my brain, and I had a big brother at the same school, so nobody messed with me. It was that and the fact that I was a boxer and could look after

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGIGETTY IMAGES

Froch has battled through numerous injuries during his career, including his 2005 match with Matthew Barney for the British and Commonwealth super middleweight titles. Froch prevailed via decision but had to have tendon surgery afterward.

myself. I never got bullied and I never got into fights, just one or two scuffles in my whole senior school time. That's what's good about boxing. It instills a sense of discipline and you know right from wrong. Your coach teaches you respect for your elders and you behave yourself, so at school, I didn't want to get intro trouble and get a detention or get suspended.

The Ring: Were you any good at other sports?

CF: I love all sports. I used to play for a rugby club. I was quick, so I used to play on the wing. And I used to play football [soccer], where I'd use my pace, although I am absolutely useless at putting the ball in the back of the net.

The Ring: What did you do between school and turning professional?

CF: I left school at 16 and did a business and finance course for two years. Then, between leaving college and getting an office job, there was a year gap and I used to work on building sites with my dad, and sometimes at weekends too. I also worked in a nightclub and my mum's pub. And then I worked in an office for a telecommunications company for three years, while still studying one day a week to get further qualifications. But there came a time, after I'd won a couple of tournaments for England, that I was able to quit my job and take up full-time boxing for England. It was funded although the money wasn't good. And while I was doing that, I continued studying, doing a diploma in sports science and physical education in Loughborough.

The Ring: Several promoters courted you. Why did you decide to turn professional with Mick Hennessy?

CF: Mick came across as a genuine and honest man, but the main reason was that I had built up a close friendship with Rob McCracken from winning the World Championship medal in Ireland, and he was with Mick. I was given the opportunity to travel down to London with Rob and train with some of the pros. We worked together for six months before I turned pro because I was thinking about the Commonwealth Games and then the next Olympics. But then I thought, *I'm already 24-years old and if I wait another three years, I will be too old.* So with Rob's guidance, I made an informed decision. Without Rob, I would never have turned pro with Mick.

The Ring: Initially, you had a lot of terrestrial exposure through the BBC, but then the BBC pulled out of boxing, and later you were on ITV [the commercial terrestrial

broadcaster], but they pulled out. And since then you've had a rough ride. Why?

CF: The BBC decided to show boxing thanks to Audley Harrison, who'd won gold in the Sydney Olympics. They showed Audley, David Haye, and me, and we were quite big news. But Audley stuffed it up. He fought nobodies and bored everyone to death, so the BBC pulled out. Me and David ended up on Sky and then I was on ITV, which was great, so virtually all my fights were on TV. But as soon as I won the world title against Jean Pascal in December 2008, the economy went bust. ITV showed the Pascal fight, which was the U.K. fight of the year, but then they pulled out of boxing.

The Ring: I was surprised Sky didn't snap you up.

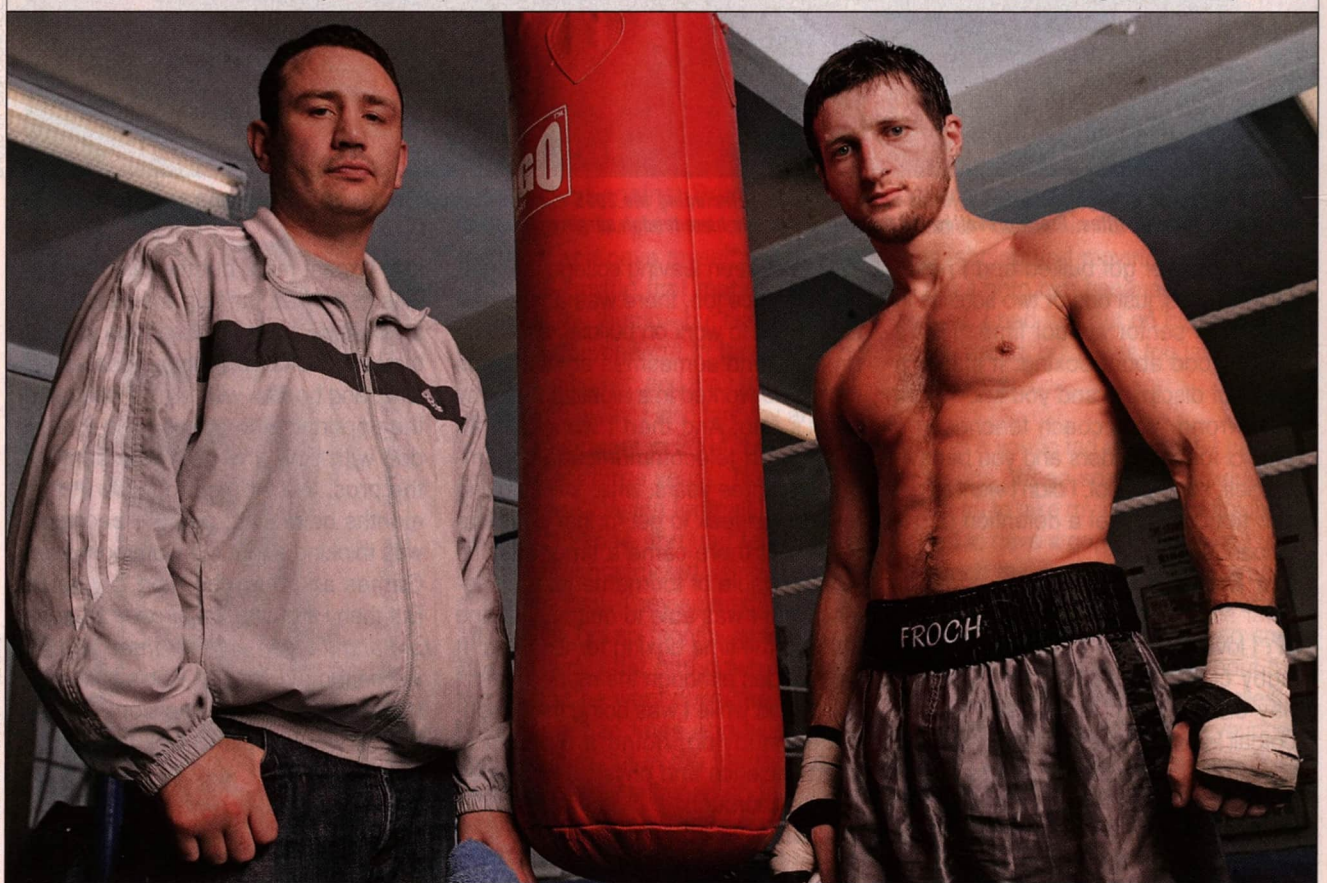
CF: I blame a lot of it on the recession, but also my promoter has no television deal. Maybe that's because of the relationship Mick has with Sky, or maybe it's that Sky just can't afford it, even though I was the fighter of the year. One way or another, I'm being represented by Mick Hennessy and I'm not on television. Is there something else behind it? Who knows? I'm not making it personal. I'm leaving people to draw their own conclusion about whether Mick's done the right job. But the facts are that Showtime came on board and rescued my career with the Super Six tournament, and at home, I'm on PrimeTime, which is a new channel that's doing a good job.

The Ring: Tell me about that title-winning fight with Pascal. How would you rate that performance?

CF: It was a brilliant fight and a brilliant performance. Pascal was an unknown quantity at the time, but we both showed what we're about. We stood in front of each other for 12 rounds and both showed the will to win, the courage, and the warrior spirit. He's since proven his worth. He's now a world champion [sic] and I'm not. Ironic how things turn out; although as far as I'm concerned, I should still be world champion and I have every chance of winning the Super Six.

The Ring: What about the Jermain Taylor fight. You were behind and took plenty of punches but pulled it out at the last moment. Were you critical of your performance?

CF: Taylor was fast and was at his best at super middleweight, having just beaten Jeff Lacy, so he was on a high. I took a punch in round three that put me down, but I don't know if you need to watch the tape back, or if I do, but I don't think I got hit with too many shots. After I got put down, I outboxed him, although two of the judges didn't see it that way. It was another one where I was in someone's backyard and the crowd influenced the judges. But there weren't many shots landed on my chin. I used my long jab and kept out of his way from rounds four to nine, and then in rounds 10 to 12, I hit him with heavy shots. I hurt him in round 11 and finished him off in the 12th, when there wasn't much coming back, except for a



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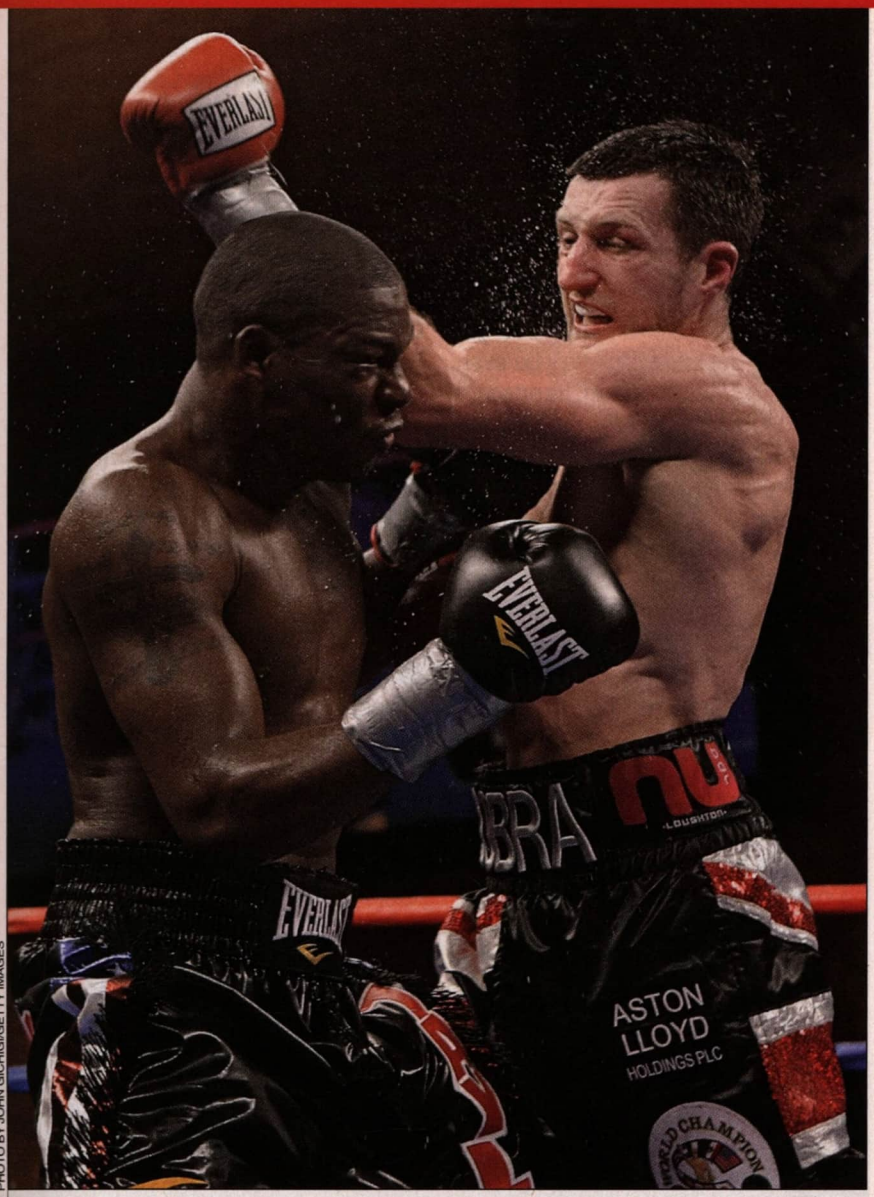
Froch poses with trainer Robert McCracken in 2005. They have enjoyed a successful partnership since Froch was still an amateur. It was also McCracken that introduced Carl to his promoter, Mick Hennessy.



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Froch figures that the beating he gave Jermain Taylor in their April 2009 bout pretty much ended Taylor's run as a world-class fighter. Taylor was also knocked out by Arthur Abraham in his next bout, precipitating Taylor's withdrawal from the Super Six.

good right at the start of the round. I think I finished Taylor off.

The Ring: We haven't talked about Andre Ward or Allan Green yet.

CF: I watched Ward fight Kessler and Edison Miranda. He did alright against Miranda by boxing and moving, but I don't think he's a big puncher. He doesn't seem to hurt his opponents, so he may struggle with Green. If Green gets in there first with a couple of big digs, Ward might find himself outgunned. But Ward is a good boxer, so he could outbox Green. I wasn't impressed with Ward against Kessler, though. I know he outboxed Kessler and did what he had to do, but let's be honest: The referee let him get away with butting him, and every time Kessler closed the gap, the referee let him get away with clinching. The tactics he used against Kessler were very dirty and sneaky. But Kessler wasn't ready. In 13 months, he'd fought just one four round warm-up. And then he fights Ward in his backyard, and his tactics were wrong.

The Ring: If Ward beats Green, his next fight is against Dirrell. Who do you favor?

CF: I can't call it, except to say it won't be very exciting. It's 50-50. There won't be much in it. Dirrell has good hand

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speed and is very skilful, but after that cheap shot knockout by Abraham, I don't know what his confidence will be like. But then again, maybe that won't be an issue because Ward isn't a big puncher.

The Ring: If Dirrell beats Ward, you may have to fight him again. What will you do differently?

CF: I'll beat him more easily. I've got him figured out and I think he'll be even more gunshy after what happened against Abraham. But it's not a fight I look forward to because he runs and holds and is negative.

The Ring: The one top super middleweight not in the Super Six is Andre Bute. If you win Super Six, do you want to fight him?

CF: Of course. He's been IBF champion for a while and I'd like to unify the title. I saw him against Edison Miranda, who is shot, and going the distance with Sergey Tatevosyan, who I knocked out in three rounds, and I'm not that impressed. He's not a big puncher even though he got rid of Librado Andrade, so he's not a fighter I take very seriously. He's one of those who always wants to fight at home and he's boring. He should have been in the Super Six but didn't want to. And Bute doesn't want to fight me. He's not interested. He was offered the fight before I went into Super Six, and we exhausted all the possible avenues to secure that fight. But he didn't want it. So that fight will probably never happen.

The Ring: Moving on to your perpetual rivalry with Joe Calzaghe. In the past, you used to goad him and now, every time he opens his mouth, he has a go at you. Why is this still bubbling away? Is it a question of legacy and reputation?

CF: Joe Calzaghe has ruined his reputation by admitting he smokes weed and snorts cocaine. Joe's finished in terms of boxing and TV work too. He's now a nonentity. When he was boxing, yeah, I wanted to fight him because he was WBC champion, but he gave the belt up rather than defend it against me.

The Ring: There's talk of a comeback. Do you take it seriously?

CF: No, not at all. You can't live the lifestyle he's living and go up to the weight he has and then come back and compete at the elite level. And he certainly couldn't come back at super middleweight.

The Ring: Although, you've said you'll one day go up to light heavyweight to give Pascal a return.

CF: Yes. I will definitely do that, although I currently make super middle no problem. It's my Polish genes. I used to walk around at 170 pounds, but it's gone up a bit because I'm 32. I walk around at 175 to 177, so there's still not a great deal to lose.

The Ring: You've been going out with the model Rachael Cordingley for a while. How did the two of you meet?

CF: Two years ago, I was single for a couple of months, and a friend of mine who'd done some PR work with Rachael thought we'd be well-suited, so he arranged for us to meet up in London. So I basically met Rachael on a blind date, although I knew what she'd look like because I'd seen her on her website and I was shocked at how beautiful she was—and still is. But it's not all about looks and beauty. It's about personality and I thought, *If we get on, who knows?* So we met and we did get on, and two years later, we're still together and are expecting our first child on June 29, which I'm really, really happy about. When I look back it's bizarre and surreal, considering how we met, but we'll be together forever as far as I'm concerned. She's the girl for me, that's for sure.

The Ring: What do you do with yourself between fights?

CF: I've got a big property portfolio. I rent out houses. I'm into double figures and all my houses are rented out, but I want to get into developing properties. I've put in bids for two pieces of land, so soon I will be putting up houses.

The Ring: A few questions on issues facing boxing: Performance enhancing drugs—are they rife in boxing?

CF: Probably overstated, although I've heard a few tales about U.S. West Coast boxing.

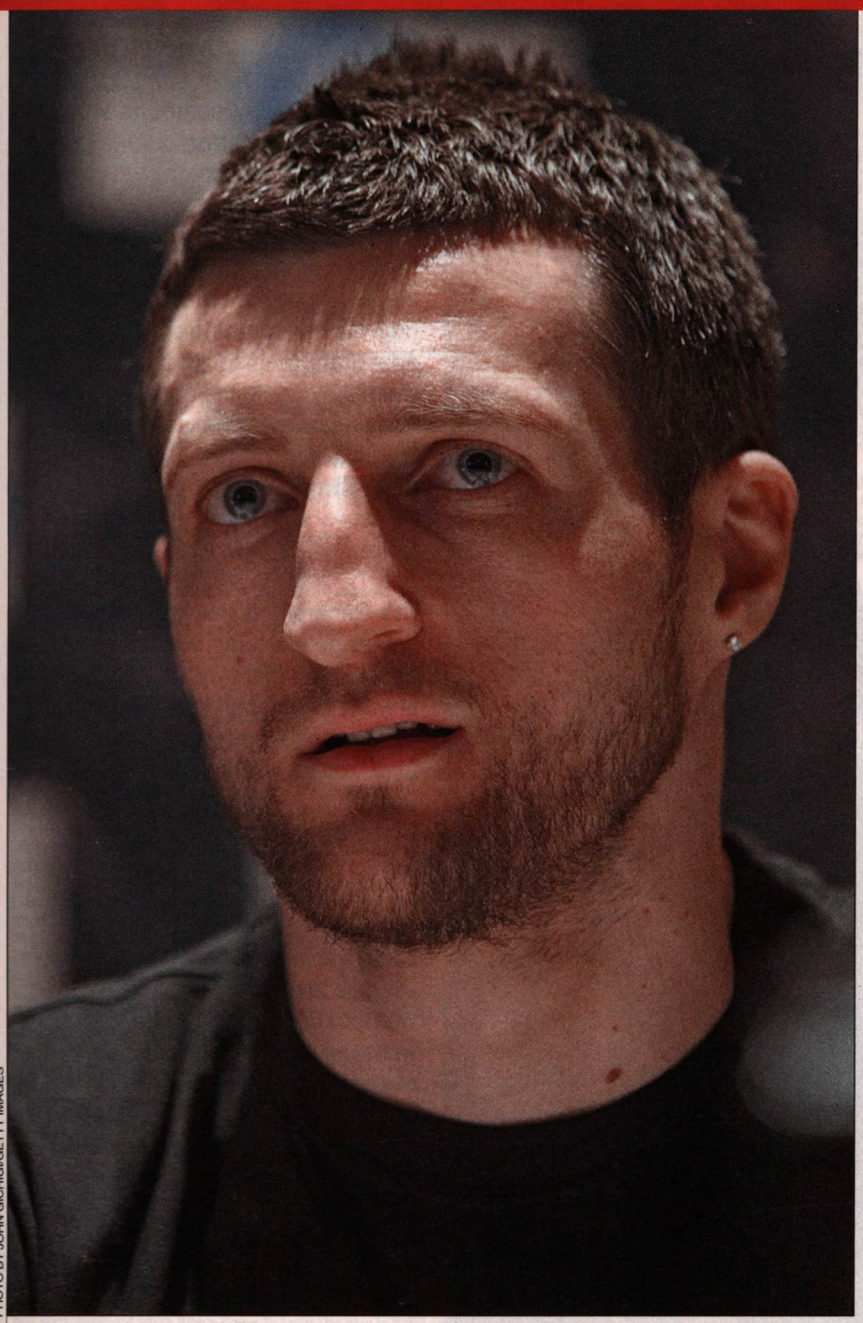

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

"Joe Calzaghe has ruined his reputation by admitting he smokes weed and snorts cocaine. Joe's finished in terms of boxing and TV work too. He's now a nonentity."

The Ring: What did you think of Floyd Mayweather's insistence that Manny Pacquiao take Olympic-style blood testing?

CF: It was a fair request. If Mayweather feels there's something going on, then to alleviate that chance of cheating, why shouldn't there be a blood test? I know Pacquiao doesn't want to be dictated to, but if he's got nothing to hide, why not? It's only a blood test, which we take every year with our medicals.

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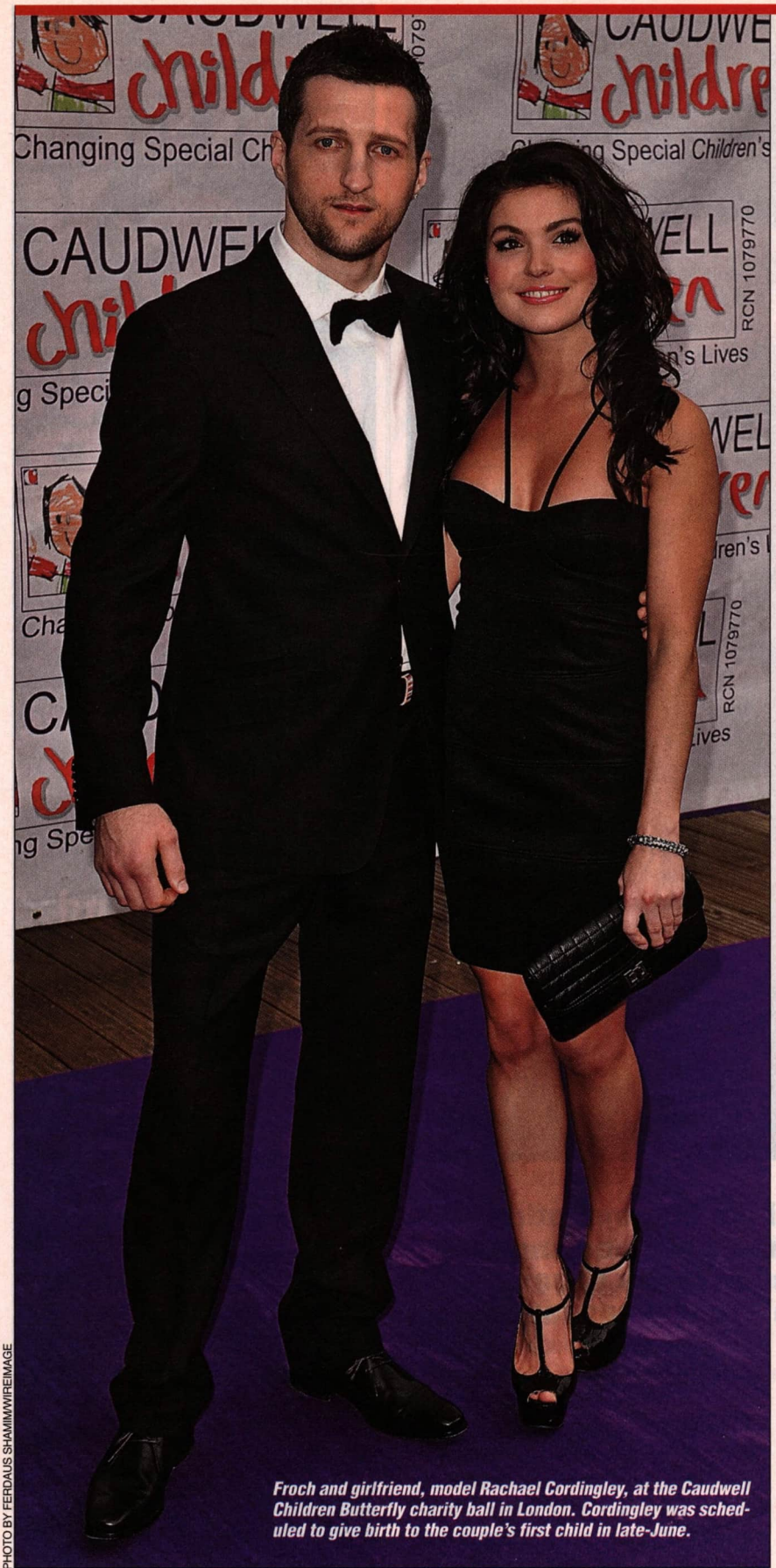

Froch and girlfriend, model Rachael Cordingley, at the Caudwell Children Butterfly charity ball in London. Cordingley was scheduled to give birth to the couple's first child in late-June.

PHOTO BY FERDAUS SHAMIM/WIREIMAGE

Why would you not want to do that and get the fight on? For me, there's only one reason why someone wouldn't want to do a drug test.

The Ring: Brain damage from boxing: Does that worry you?

CF: Not really, no. You have an annual brain scan, and if there's a problem, they'll let you know. Brain damage in the ring mainly comes from people who dehydrate themselves too much that when they are in the ring they have no fluid around the brain, and then they get a brain bleed.

The Ring: Referees and judges: We've already talked a bit about them, but how do they compare between America and Europe?

CF: Generally, it's clear that the home fighter gets a huge advantage, and it shouldn't be that way. It's not fair. But it is worst in Europe, definitely. Germany, Denmark, it's really bad in those countries. You've got no chance if you go to Germany.

The Ring: The alphabet bodies and their sanctioning fees: Would you like to go back to the days of one champion per division?

CF: That would be good, but you'd struggle to get title fights. What's wrong with boxing is that top fighters don't want to fight other top fighters. It's more of a problem than all these titles. Certain boxers don't want to fight and certain promoters protect them, which is why Super Six is so good. I'm not sure much can be done to clean the title situation, but the three belts that are taken most seriously are the WBC, WBA and IBF. The situation with sanctioning fees is not ideal, but without the titles, you might not attract television and the crowds. And because you're a WBC champion, you earn good money.

The Ring: Finally, when will you retire?

CF: In about three or four years time, because the human body can only go on for so long. I know that Bernard Hopkins kept going, although he didn't look too clever in his last fight against Roy Jones. But he's 45, so 36 isn't too old. I first want to win Super Six and have a big fight with Pascal if he's still around. ■

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SAUL ALVAREZ MIGHT LOOK LIKE OPIE ...

BUT THIS FRECKLE-FACED, REDHEADED MEXICAN CAN FIGHT!

By William Dettloff
PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

To look at him, you wouldn't think Saul Alvarez was anything special as far as prizefighters go. For starters, there's the red hair and freckles. We associate them with the Irish or Scottish, and it's been a long time indeed since those countries distinguished themselves as mass producers of high quality fighters, though natives of both remain earnest, and, with the right encouragement, tenacious and charmingly easy to provoke.

Alvarez' body doesn't strike one as very fighter-like either. Neither muscle bound nor very sinewy or elongated, it gives the impression of being most useful perhaps on a soccer field or volleyball court, where its stocky athleticism would whisk Alvarez from corner to corner in gleeful pursuit of victory that

does not demand quite so much from its participants as does boxing.

"I'm different from the other boxers. My personality and appearance are different, but I just love boxing," Alvarez told THE RING through Golden Boy Promotions' publicist Ramiro Gonzalez, who interpreted. Alvarez speaks no English. "Good or bad, I know a lot of people say, 'Look! Look at this guy with the red hair.' But it doesn't matter to me, I just love boxing."

Red hair or no, Alvarez, just 19 years old, is all fighter, as he demonstrated to 1.4 million boxing consumers, give or take, when he stopped the competent Jose Cotto underneath Floyd Mayweather's brilliant win over Shane Mosley on May 1 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

It was not only the win over Cotto itself that established Alvarez' boxing bonafides to an American audience mostly seeing him for the first time. After all, Cotto, 32, for all his pedigree and shiny 31-1-1 (23) record entering the fight, was by most estimates at least a couple weight classes over his head at junior middleweight and had come up short in two fights against better opponents—at lightweight: a draw against Prawet Singwancha in 2007 and a decision loss a year earlier against Juan Diaz. And the last three guys he faced before meeting Alvarez had 46 defeats between them.

Still, in the first round, a left hook sent Alvarez reeling into the ropes. Cotto, Caguas, Puerto Rico, pounded him there, and a less levelheaded referee than Tony Weeks might have stopped it. Alvarez, 32-0-1 (24), slips punches the way trailer parks slip tornadoes—hence part of his charm—and Cotto unloaded. A good 30

A combination of Alvarez' unusual looks and fan-friendly style has already made him a star in his native Mexico. Beating Jose Cotto in front of 1.4 million pay-per-view customers on the Floyd Mayweather-Shane Mosley undercard was a great way to introduce him to U.S. fans.

Alvarez fends off Cotto's first-round attack. Things looked bad for "Canelo" when Cotto blasted him with a series of hard shots, but he survived the onslaught and turned things around in the second round.

seconds later, Alvarez was still there, and in the next round, he spun Cotto around and dropped him with a heavy right.

Alvarez, 150, gradually wore down Cotto, 149, with straight, heavy punches. In the ninth, a series of thudding rights convinced both Weeks and Cotto that enough was enough, and Weeks called it at the 2:51 mark. Alvarez led on the judges' cards by three scores of 78-73.

For Alvarez fans, there are a couple ways to look at that nearly disastrous first round. The good news: He almost got his head handed to him by a much smaller guy, but he survived and eventually won. The bad news: He survived and eventually won, but he almost got his head handed to him by a much smaller guy.

As any educated fighter or one who has been well-coached by his promoter, will tell you, surviving a round like Alvarez did is a learning experience. It's hard to know yet whether he is educated or well-coached, but the kid says the right things. He even concedes, more or less, that the pressure of fighting on a very big card—the second biggest non-heavyweight pay-per-view ever, as it turned out—got to him.

"[The fight] was a very important situation, a different atmosphere," Alvarez said. "It was a very big card, a big show. The good thing was I learned in that first round that I knew how to control the situation. I knew how to control the panic. I knew how to handle those punches and show the public and the media that I have a good chin. That was the best thing that could have happened to me because in that first round, I learned a lot."

Alvarez was born and raised in Juanacatlán, Jalisco, Mexico. Juanacatlán is named, more or less, for its history of producing tasty onions, which may or may not explain the fighter's red hair. Jalisco is one of Mexico's more economically and culturally developed states, which means that if you're looking for a story line that involves a fighter's desperate quest to rescue a loving and suffering family from a life of dusty Mexican squalor, you won't find it here. This is not the story of The Brothers Marquez. It is closer to that of Marco Antonio Barrera.

"We were a middleclass family," Alvarez said. "I got into boxing naturally because I wanted to help my family and myself, but also because I love boxing.

Although his payoff punch is the right hand to the head, Alvarez is also a good body puncher, an asset that he'll need as he steps up to better competition. Cotto was a good test, but the Puerto Rican was a smaller man who had done his best work at lighter weights.

We are not a rich family, but whatever we need, we have it."

Alvarez started learning to box at 11 years old after a fight with another youngster in the street. As one of five brothers, all of whom have fought professionally to one degree or another, he had choices. A boy with five brothers has many back-ups and bodyguards. But Alvarez took to boxing immediately. Moreover, as has been reported elsewhere, he and his brothers hold the record for most siblings fighting on one boxing card. At least two of those brothers hadn't ever fought before and don't plan on ever fighting again, but you take world records where you can.

Alvarez said it was attending the pro debut of his oldest brother, Rigoberto, that hooked him. He turned pro at 15 with no appreciable amateur experience and never felt like a boy fighting men. It was too much fun.

"I really love boxing and always had a desire to start in the boxing business," he said. "And I was so hungry. I wanted to start so that's why I did it when I was 15 years old. I didn't want to wait any more."

It didn't take long for the fans to appreciate his two-fisted style or his red hair and freckles. "El Canelo" (Spanish for Cinnamon) quickly built a following that has made him one of Mexico's brightest young stars. How bright? Last January, Oscar De La Hoya went personally to Mexico to sign Alvarez to a contract and afterward called it "a historical day for Golden Boy." He then told the press Alvarez had the potential to be the next Julio Cesar Chavez. That's heady praise. But in terms of his appeal to the masses, the numbers don't lie. Neither does the buzz he created with the win over Cotto, even if it was touch-and-go early on.

"He definitely has chemical appeal," said HBO's Jim Lampley, who called Alvarez' fight against Cotto. "I base that on the fact that in the week following our showing him on that PPV, I got a lot of comments from fans, especially my friends here in southern California who are Chicano fans. They loved what they saw. Just the physical look of the kid, the poise that he showed getting past the rough spot in the first round."

Lampley's friends aren't the only ones interested. Fighting almost exclusively in Mexico, Alvarez has attracted huge crowds for a prospect, sometimes selling out 15,000-seat arenas. His televised fights reportedly draw a 15 share in Mexico, which is extraordinary. He appears to be on his way to supplanting Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., a Mexican juggernaut for Bob Arum's Top Rank.

Chavez has been headlining his own pay-per-view shows for several years, though he's never faced a top fighter or even anyone as threatening as Cotto. That Chavez will have faced John Duddy in a showdown of sorts by the time you read this is a reflection of the care with which he has been moved, if you can say he's been "moved" at all. Matched is probably a better word, as "moved" implies a heading in some direction. Alvarez receives no such accommodations and doesn't care for comparisons to Chavez.

"It's not who's better, me or him," Alvarez said when asked about Chavez Jr. "I don't want to be compared, it matters what the fans say and what the media says. I will be the number-one boxer in Mexico.

"I always offer good fights and the people like it. They like how I fight. I'm the only one in Mexico that can get that kind of attention right now. The only one. People crave fights and people are

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Fans in Cabazon, California, welcome Alvarez when he traveled there for a match with Larry Mosley in 2008.

seeing that I'm getting better and better and better. Each fight I have, I try to have the people like it."

Like any exciting fighter, Alvarez has flaws, some of them serious. He is primarily a right-hand puncher who mixes in a competent body attack. As noted, his defense is fairly porous. He's not especially quick on his feet, and that Cotto was able to so perilously hurt him, even if the kid did ride it out, raises questions about his chin. Finally, there is an obvious lack of hand speed. That was evident perhaps to a greater degree than during any other fight in his decision win over Larry Mosley in California in 2008. Many thought Mosley, a smart, quick mover, outboxed Alvarez but eventually succumbed to his opponent's greater strength and youth.

"This kid has a tremendous wish about him, as there would be about any Mexican prospect at this point," said Lampley. "I really like him. He has maturity. But I don't think he has the kind of speed that it takes to succeed at or near the top of the welterweight division.

"He's a quality fighter who will be able to fight quality opponents and look for upward mobility, but won't be able to do it at 147 or to the level that Mexicans would like," Lampley said. "He reminds me of Fernando Vargas, specifically because Vargas had everything but the great quickness. At the end of the day he wasn't as quick as Oscar De La Hoya or Felix Trinidad and it cost him." We'll see if it costs Alvarez too.

As Lampley said, the top fighters at or around 147 are speed merchants—Mayweather, Manny Pacquiao, Mosley, Andre Berto. Those at 140 today and likely to move up sooner or later, such as Tim Bradley, Devon Alexander, and Lamont Peterson, are no less flashy. Alvarez will almost certainly be better off trying to make his mark at 154, where THE RING ranks him number 10, and forgetting 147 completely.

Alvarez said he wants to win world titles in the welterweight, junior middleweight, and middleweight divisions and to be "remembered in boxing forever." We don't know if he'll do all that. He might have to settle for proving there's no guarantee that a guy with red hair and freckles can't fight. You can't count on anything anymore. ■

Oscar De La Hoya personally traveled to Mexico to sign sizzling-hot prospect Alvarez to a promotional contract, saying that the signing was "a historical day for Golden Boy."

GREAT BLOOMERS

SERGIO MARTINEZ IS THE NEWEST GOLDEN OLDIE

By Eric Raskin

Rare is the man who stands at the intersection of mental mastery and physical prowess able to walk both roads at once. For most of us, we must confront the monumental frustration of realizing that wisdom and youth won't overlap. When we're in our physical primes, we lack the understanding to make the most of it. By the time we have it all figured out, our bodies can't quite do anymore what our minds want them to.

For boxers and most male athletes in general the physical peak arrives around age 25 and has passed by age 30. Though those upper limits are constantly being pushed back by advances in medical science, nutrition, and various legal and illegal drugs, we still generally see boxers deliver their greatest performances in their 20s and then tailspin in their 30s. Even though ring intelligence and maturity are on the rise in a fighter's later years, it's rare to find one who's actually better at 35 than he was at 25 or 30, because by 35, his body is typically betraying him.

But try telling all of that to Sergio Martinez. "Maravilla" turned 35 on February 21 and eight weeks later, he outpointed Kelly Pavlik to claim the middleweight championship of the world. Throughout his 20s, into his 30s, and up until less than two years ago, he was a virtual unknown, at least outside of his native Argentina (where he fought from '97-'02), Spain (where he fought from '02-'03 and '05-'07), and the U.K. (where he fought from '03-'04). Now,

Thirty-five-year-old Sergio Martinez celebrates his middleweight championship-winning victory over Kelly Pavlik. It took Martinez a long time to reach the top, but unlike many boxers his age, he appears to be fighting better than ever.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

he's one of the most marketable stars in boxing, a legitimate world champion, and a pound-for-pounder. And by the looks of things, he's still improving from fight to fight.

Martinez is the ultimate late bloomer—proof that you don't need to enter a boxing gym at age six and have 200 amateur fights to eventually master the sport.

Martinez first started boxing at age 20 and turned pro at 22. He went undefeated through his first 17 fights, then two days before his 25th birthday, he was knocked out in the seventh round by Antonio Margarito in Las Vegas; it was a competitive fight early, but it gradually became clear that the relative novice from Buenos Aires wasn't ready for that level of opposition yet. So Martinez got right back to work, soon relocated to Europe, and won 22 straight before returning to the States at age 32.

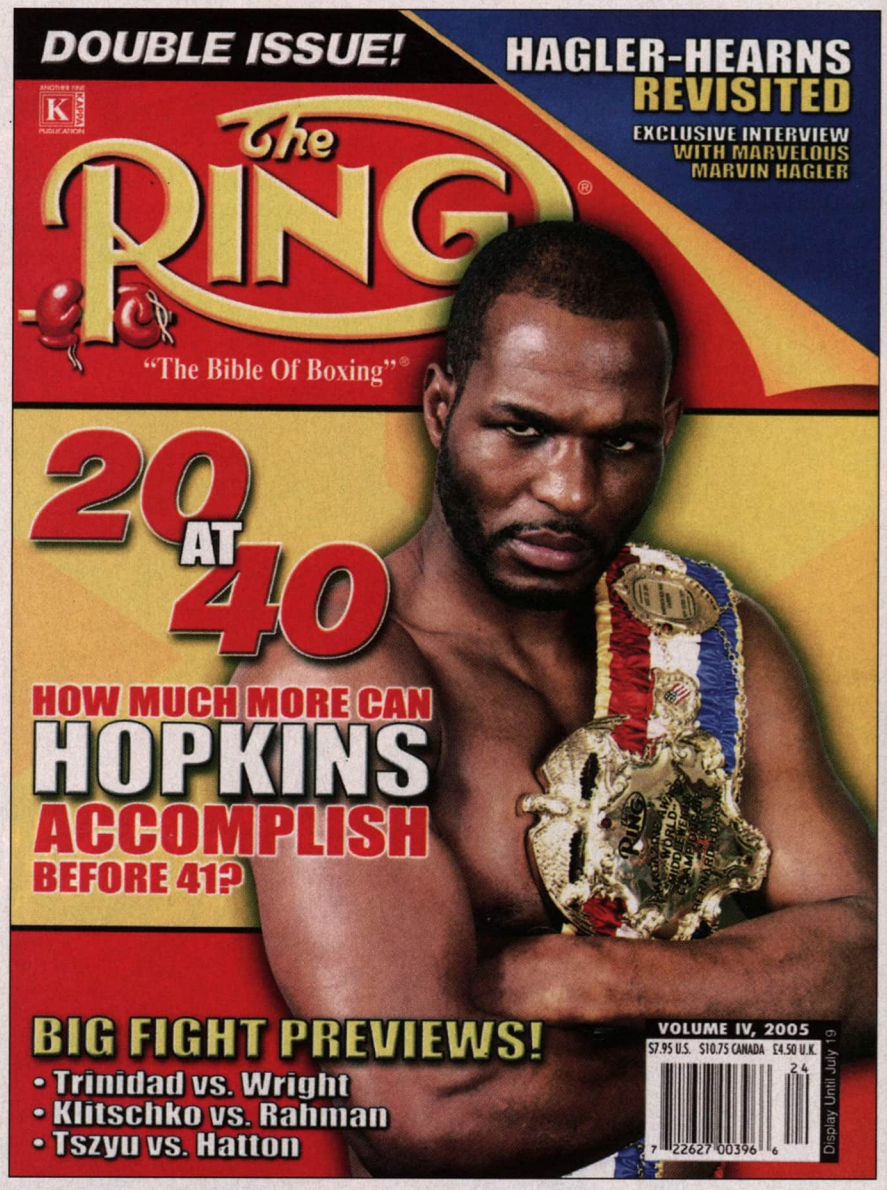
"I really didn't pay much attention to him until about 30 months ago, when [promoter] Sampson [Lewkowicz] sent me a DVD," said Martinez' current American promoter, Lou DiBella. "I watched a bunch of his fights and I was blown away. I was like, *Oh my god, where the f___ has this guy been?* I looked at that DVD, and I said, *it's time for this guy to come to America, man.*"

Martinez was 33 when he made his HBO debut and dominated Alex Bunema en route to an eighth-round stoppage. He then got the best of Kermit Cintron, only to be denied a knockout victory by suspect refereeing and a decision by outrageous judging, settling for a draw officially. He continued to elevate his level of opposition by taking on Paul Williams next, defying experts who labeled him a major underdog and pushing "The Punisher" to the limit before losing a disputed majority decision. Then at age 35, he broke through to the boxing superstar level by upsetting Pavlik for the lineal title at 160 pounds—even though Martinez' natural division is junior middleweight.

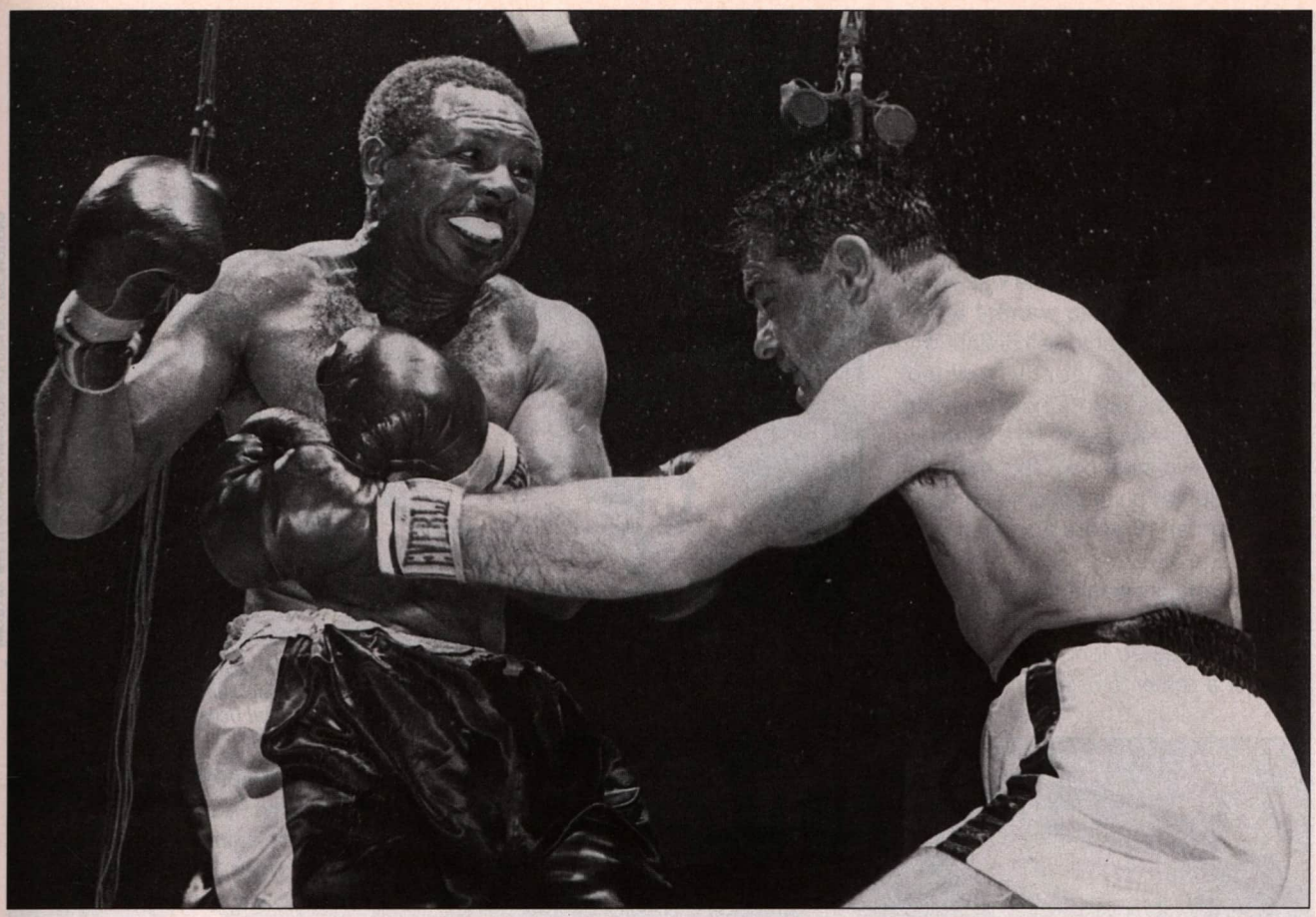
"There are a lot of factors," DiBella said when explaining Martinez' unusual emergence at an advanced age. "He had no amateur career at all and basically developed as a professional. He played two other sports, but they weren't contact sports. He's never been beaten up, not even in the Margarito fight, really, so he's a very young 35. He wasn't getting the opposition he needed or the sparring he needed in Spain, but he's getting those things now, getting world-class sparring in Oxnard [California]. His weight never fluctuates; he's a consummate athlete. I think he's like Bernard Hopkins in the sense that he doesn't abuse his body, has no bad habits, and doesn't let his weight fluctuate. Guys like that just naturally last longer. I don't think this is a man who's approaching the other side of the hill yet. I think this is a guy who's dead center in the prime of his career."

The Hopkins comparison is a natural one—and not just because DiBella also happened to guide B-Hop to his overdue breakthrough opportunities in his mid-30s. Hopkins is the ultimate example of a fighter from the past couple decades who didn't make much of a mark in his 20s but did Hall of Fame work in his 30s (and, in this rare instance, his 40s).

Like Martinez, Hopkins got a late start in boxing, though he wasn't distracted by other sports. Prison bars confined him at the age when his pugilistic peers were heading off to the Olympics or turning pro. "The Executioner" made his pro debut at 23, won his first title



Bernard Hopkins was already considered an ageless marvel back in 2005 when he tallied his 20th successful defense of the middleweight title at age 40. Since then, B-Hop has also won and lost the world light heavyweight title and is still fighting at age 45.



Archie Moore was 47 when he made his final defense of the light heavyweight title, against Giulio Rinaldi, in 1961. But even though Moore fought at a high level at an advanced age, that doesn't mean he wasn't a better fighter when he was younger.

belt at 30, and spent the next six years establishing himself as the world's premier middleweight without landing the megafight that would elevate him to mainstream recognition. That finally came when he schooled Felix Trinidad in 2001, and since then, he's emerged as a living legend by adding such names as Oscar De La Hoya, Antonio Tarver, Winky Wright, Pavlik, and, most recently at the absurd age of 45, Roy Jones.

"I don't think boxers really ever get *better* in their 30s," opined veteran promoter and boxing historian Don Elbaum, "but you can develop smarts, like Hopkins did. He gets the opponent off of his game plan. Hopkins is fantastic at that, and he learned that through experience. You slow down physically, but you can offset that if you *learn*. Hopkins has always been very good, and now people are talking about how great he is, because his longevity gave him a sort of fame. It's the same with Archie Moore. Archie Moore's prime was before he won the light heavyweight title. People were saying how great he was; he just could never get the shot. Then he remained successful for so long after that, that's what he became known for. But these guys were all better fighters when they were a little younger."

There is no better example than "The Old Mongoose" of a fighter who bloomed late in part because he had to wait an outrageously long time for his title opportunity. Moore turned pro in 1936 and was rated by THE RING as a top light heavyweight contender straight through from 1945-'51 without getting a chance to fight for the title until December 17, 1952. He defeated Joey Maxim that night, never lost the championship in the ring and finally retired 11 years later.

It is, unfortunately, a common tale seen throughout boxing history: the fighter, whose fame lags behind his talent, making him a high-risk-low-reward proposition for champions or babied contenders. A few years before Moore, there was Albert "Chalky" Wright, who turned pro at age 16 (many experts believe he was actually older) but had to wait 13 years and 140 victories for his shot at the featherweight title, creating the impression that he was a late bloomer. A few years after Moore, Sonny Liston came along, and his wait for a shot at Floyd Patterson and the heavyweight title is well documented. More recently, Winky Wright had to go to Europe to find fights before finally becoming a star (if not a draw) in America in his 30s.

Are those fighters late bloomers? Certainly you could say recognition came late for them. And due to diminishing mainstream media coverage of boxing—which is not just a recent trend but one that's been ongoing over the last five or six decades—there have been countless fighters who had to persevere for a decade or more before building up enough fame to make serious money. Marvelous Marvin Hagler is best remembered for his fights with Sugar Ray Leonard and Tommy Hearns, but those were the last and third-to-last fights, respectively, of a 67-bout career,

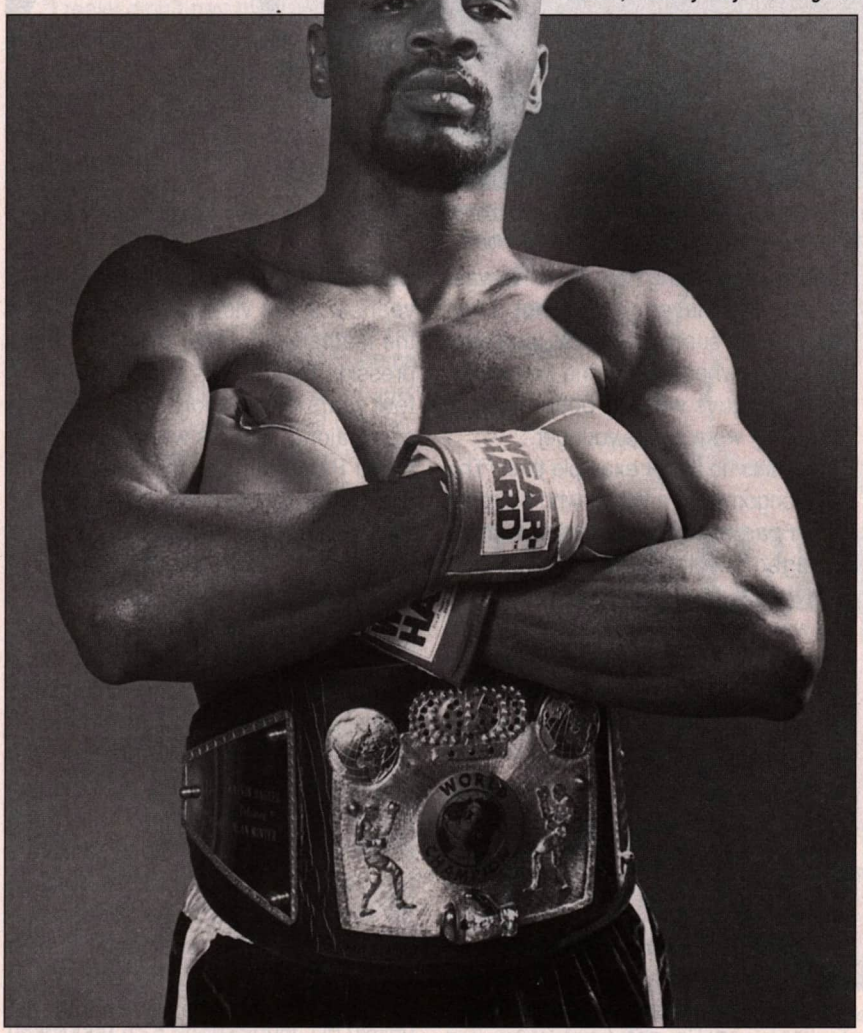
and Hagler was past his absolute prime by the time either of those superfights happened.

In a strange way, we've seen something similar happen with Floyd Mayweather the last few years. He turned pro at 19 and won a title at 21, but it took him more than a decade of remaining undefeated before, at 30, he was widely recognized enough to warrant a pay-per-view mega-event like his fight with Oscar De La Hoya. That victory took Mayweather's star to a new level and for the three years since, he's been one of the top two most bankable names in boxing. But it's quite possible he was a better fighter 10 years ago than he is now, at age 33.

You certainly would never call Mayweather a late bloomer, but because it takes so long these days for a fighter to establish a mainstream name (especially if his fights aren't overly entertaining), his star took a while to shine.

PHOTO BY JEFF FUSCO/HOGANPHOTOS/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

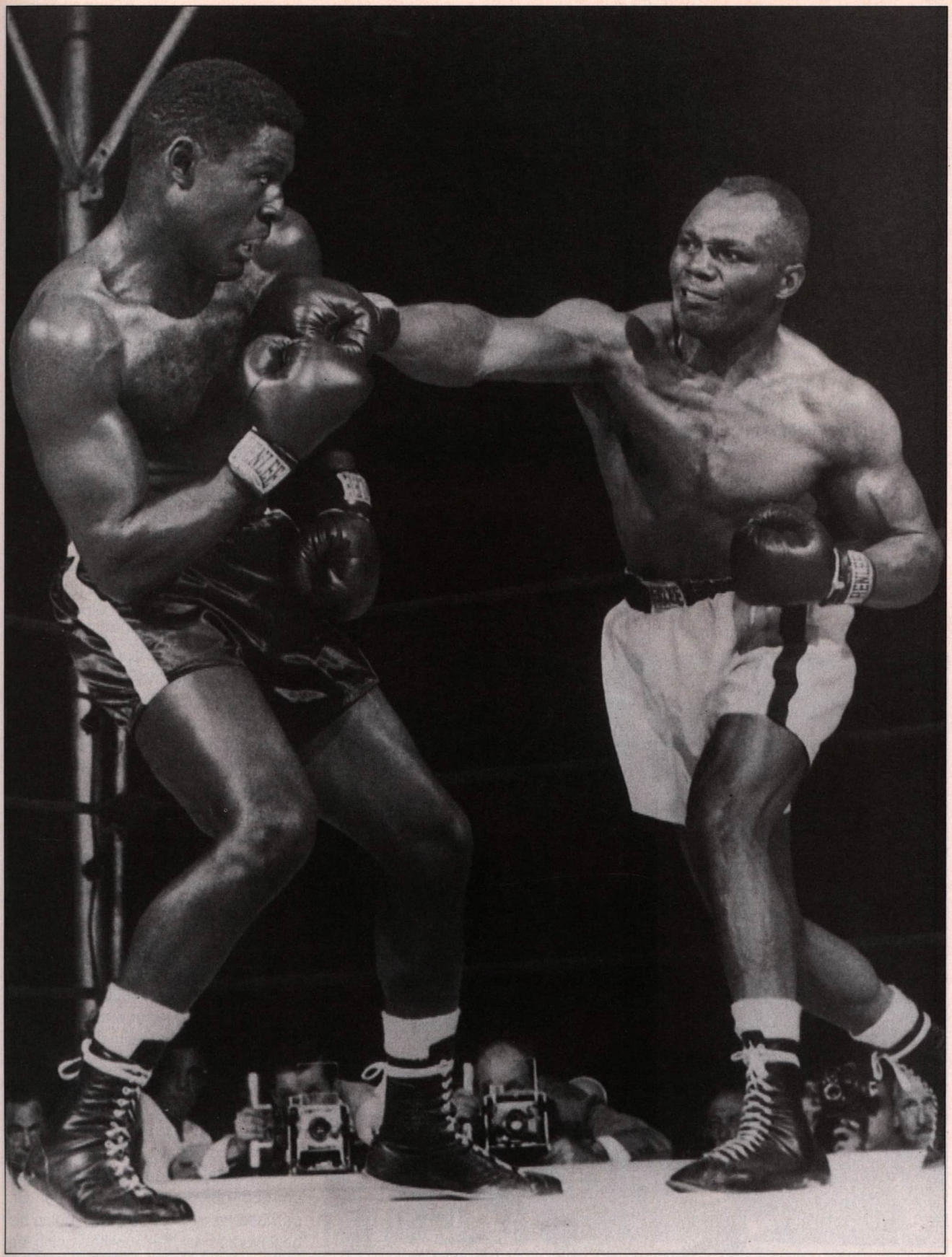
Even though he is now one of boxing's few crossover stars, Floyd Mayweather is a bit of a late bloomer. Despite the fact that he's been beating quality fighters most of his career, "Money May" didn't go mainstream until he beat Oscar De La Hoya in 2007.



Marvin Hagler turned pro at 19 but didn't win the middleweight title until his 54th pro bout. Moreover, "Marvelous Marvin" didn't really become a mainstream superstar until he beat Tommy Hearns at age 31.

Still, the most common type of late bloomer in boxing is the one who enters the game late. Rocky Marciano—who was introduced to the sport by an uncle while still young but never got serious about it until serving in the Army—had his first amateur fight at 23 and turned pro at 24. His perfect 49-0 career was remarkably brief, spanning just 8½ years from beginning to end. It's odd to suggest that someone who retired at age 32 was a late bloomer, but that description is appropriate for "The Rock."

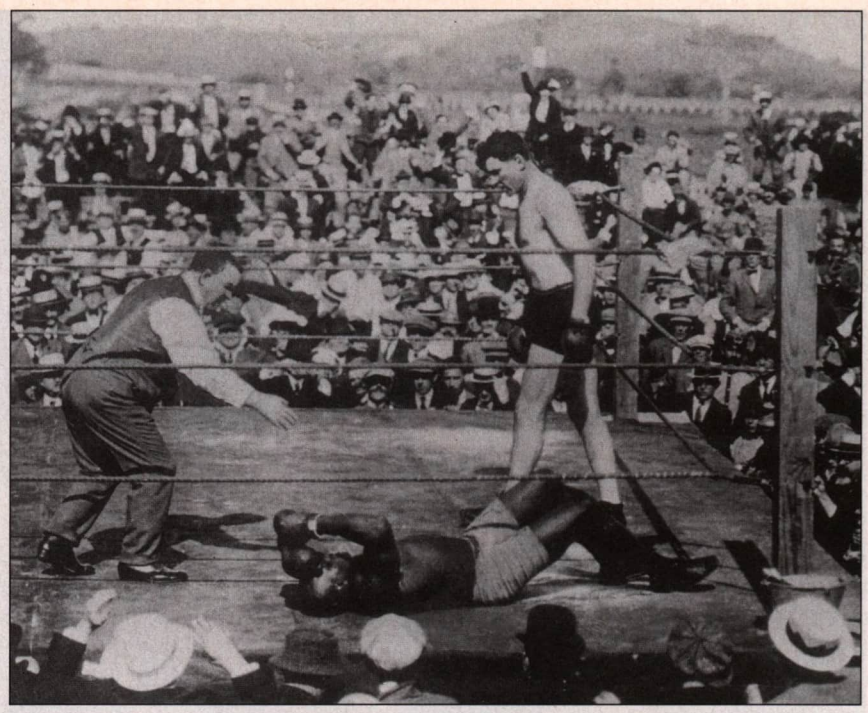
Another heavyweight champ with the same nickname, Hasim Rahman, didn't begin boxing until age 21. Jess Willard was almost 30 by the time he started boxing (He was 34 when he won the heavyweight championship from Jack Johnson in 1915). Ken Norton started boxing in the Marines at age 20, and a decade later, at age 30, he became a star by upsetting Muhammad Ali. Elmer "Violent" Ray, a 1940s heavyweight contender, turned pro at age 30, which explains why his biggest bouts came from age 34 to 38. Though his father was a pro fighter, Anthony Mundine focused on rugby before he finally turned to boxing at the age of 25.



For decades, Jersey Joe Walcott, who won the heavyweight championship at age 37, was the standard-bearer for boxing success at an old age. Walcott is pictured here on his way to a decision victory over Ezzard Charles in 1952.

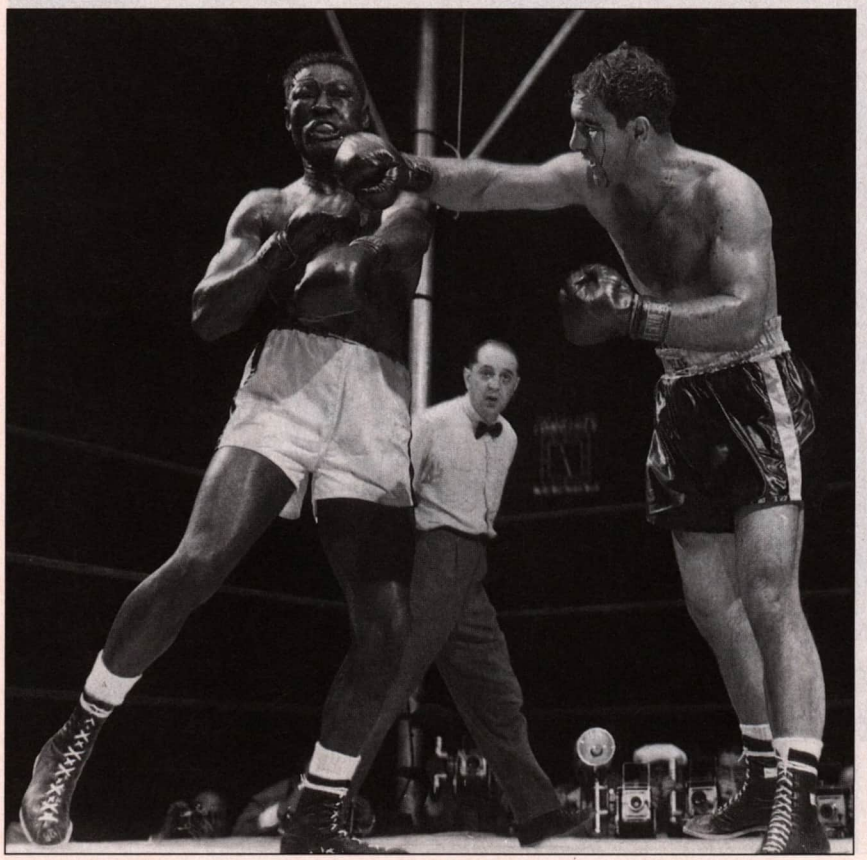
But perhaps the most interesting subcategory of late bloomers are the ones who simply take many years of learning on the job to develop into complete, championship-caliber fighters. Hopkins and Martinez, in addition to getting off to late starts in boxing, both fit this description. But probably the most famous example is Jersey Joe Walcott.

The man born Arnold Cream turned pro at age 16, had assorted starts and stops to his career, and lost almost as many fights as he won early on. He finally started putting it all together in his early-30s, after World War II, and got his first title shot at 33, losing a controversial decision to an aging Joe Louis. Four years and four more title shots later, Walcott unexpectedly knocked out Ezzard Charles to become heavyweight champion at age 37.



It is well known that Jack Johnson was past his prime when he lost the heavyweight title to Jess Willard in 1915. But it is seldom recalled that Willard was already 33 when he knocked out Johnson in the 26th round.

It's hard to get the nickname "Old Bones" without being something of a late bloomer, and Joe Brown was, like Walcott, a fighter who struggled for many years before finding his pugilistic groove. Brown turned pro in 1943 at age 17, and after running hot and cold for about the first 75 fights of his career, he changed trainers in 1955 and changed his trajectory, as Bill Gore transformed him from a modest-hitting defensive fighter into a more aggressive and attractive contender. The next year, at age 30, he finally got a title shot and outpointed Bud Smith for the lightweight championship, a title he held for the ensuing six years.



Rocky Marciano jolts Ezzard Charles with a right hand during their June 1954 heavyweight title fight. "The Brockton Blockbuster" didn't turn pro until he was 24, which was considered unusually old back in the 1940s.

From Brown to Marciano to Hagler to Martinez, fighters have bloomed late for a variety of reasons over the course of boxing history. When you add up all of the late bloomers, it seems like a lengthy list, but they're actually a fairly exclusive group when you spread them out across 100 years or so.

The great majority of fighters are at their best in their younger days, and by the time their brains catch up to their bodies, the punches absorbed have robbed them of the physical tools they need to succeed. Only on rare occasions do we see fighters retain athletic youthfulness long enough to merge with the wisdom and maturity that usually doesn't come until you've been alive 30 years or so.

Sergio Martinez happens to be in a place right now, at age 35, where he still has maximal athleticism and has experienced enough to know how to put it to maximal use. Maravilla is currently doing the best work of his career. Or, perhaps we should say, he's doing his best work *so far*; the way he's going, it's quite possible that this late bloomer's absolute boxing prime still lies ahead. ■

Lightweight champion Joe Brown rests his "Old Bones" in a rocking chair. Brown turned pro at age 17, but didn't get a title shot until he was 30 years old. That's not very old by today's standards, but was considered ancient in 1956.

Summary

Heavyweights
Ruslan Chagaev W 12 Kali Meehan
Chauncy Welliver W 12 Daniel Tai
Jean Marc Mormeck W 10 Fres Oquendo
Sergei Liakhovich KO 9 Evans Quinn
Shannon Briggs KO 1 Dominique Alexander
Michael Grant KO 1 Kevin Burnett
Deontay Wilder KO 3 Alvaro Morales
Derek Chisora KO 2 Danny Williams
Larry Olubamiwo KO 1 Colin Kenna
Kelvin Price W 6 Tor Hamer

Cruiserweights
Krzysztof Wlodarczyk KO 8 Giacobbe Fragomeni
Marco Huck KO 9 Brian Minto
James Cermak D 12 Frank White
Marcel Erler W 10 Roy Meissner
Ed Perry KO 7 Jeff Yeoman
Salvatore Erittu KO 4 Adnan Buharalija

Light Heavyweights
John Waldron W 10 Jamie Power
Vasily Lepikhin W 10 Fuad Muradov
Aleksy Kuziemski W 10 Igor Mikhalkin
Otis Griffin KO 8 Byron Mitchell
Yordanis Despaigne W 10 Richard Hall
Karo Murat W 12 Tommy Karpency
Dustin Dirks KO 8 Theo Kruger
Andrzej Fonfara KO 4 Roger Cantrell
Roman Simakov KO 2 Ben Nsafoah

Super Middleweights
Kali Jacobus W 12 Komgrit Nanakorn
Emiliano Gomez W 10 Jose Larracochea
Scott Sigmon W 10 Carlton Holland
Marcus Johnson W 10 Derek Edwards
Roberto Santos KO 8 Othman Amnad
James DeGale KO 5 Sam Horton
Gilberto Sanchez KO 2 Jesus Ayala

Middleweights
Andy Lee KO 2 Mamadou Thiam
Peter Manfredo Jr. KO 10 Angel Hernandez
Johannes Mwetupunga W 10 William Hadlow
Jorge Heiland W 10 Alejandro Falliga
Billi Godoy W 10 Cristian Rios
Saul Duran W 10 Hector Camacho
Salomon Rodriguez KO 6 Esau Herrera
Daniel Jacobs KO 2 Juan Astorga
Daniel Edouard KO 2 Jose Arosemena
Taisei Marumoto KO 2 Sanchai Sithsaithong
Israel Carrillo KO 2 Alberto Fernandez

Junior Middleweights
Paul Williams Tech. Win 4 Kermit Cintron
Sergiy Dzinziruk KO 10 Daniel Dawson
Ryan Rhodes KO 6 Luca Messi
Antonio Margarito W 10 Roberto Garcia
Tomas Vysokai W 10 Yao Yi Ma
Kris Andrews W 10 Anthony Lessard
Saul Alvarez KO 9 Jose Cotto
Jaime Barboza KO 7 Jose Pinzon
Shawn Porter KO 5 Robert Kliewer

Welterweights
Floyd Mayweather W 12 Shane Mosley
Breidis Prescott KO 3 Jason Davis
James Giltrow W 10 Jason Kanofski
Abraham Osuna W 8 Jaime Hernandez
Wale Omotoso KO 4 Kiatchai Singwancha
Vitaliy Demyanenko KO 2 Walter Gomez
Gerald Nekhubvi KO 2 Ali Nuumbembe
Said Ouali KO 1 Hector Saldivia

Junior Welterweights
Amir Khan KO 11 Paul Malignaggi
(Retains WBA Title)
Victor Ortiz W 10 Nate Campbell
Julio Diaz W 10 Herman Ngoudjo
Silverio Ortiz W 12 Fernando Angulo
Khabib Allakhverdiev W 12 Karen Tevosyan
Isidro Silva W 10 Francisco Olvera
Ruslan Provodnikov KO 9 Emanuel Augustus
Claudio Olmedo KO 8 Carlos Ahumada
Andrey Klimov KO 7 Alexander Saltykov
Danny Garcia KO 7 Christopher Fernandez
Sharif Bogere KO 5 Ilido Julio
Mike Dallas Jr. KO 2 Daniel Gonzalez
Brunet Zamora KO 1 Eduardo Roman
Valentine Hosokawa W 8 Daichi Sakoda

Lightweights
Humberto Soto W 12 Ricardo Dominguez
(Retains WBC Title)
Michael Katsidis KO 3 Kevin Mitchell
Ji-Hoon Kim KO 1 Ameth Diaz
John Murray KO 11 Gary Buckland
Urbano Antillon W 10 Rene Gonzalez
Robert Guerrero KO 8 Roberto Arrieta
Martin Haikali W 12 Jatoorora Tjingaveta

Gilberto Gonzalez KO 10 Daniel Hernandez
Humberto Gutierrez KO 6 Rafael Cobos
Karl Dargan KO 5 Jorge Ruiz
Anthony Marcial KO 4 Dante Paulino
Jimrex Jaca KO 4 James Kimori
Seiichi Okada KO 3 Abi Metiaman
Stefy Bull KO 2 Dean Hickman
Jason Pagara KO 2 Romeo Jakosalem
Adrien Broner KO 1 Rafael Lora

Junior Lightweights

Vitali Tajbert Tech. Win 9 Hector Velazquez
(Retains WBC Title)
Takashi Uchiyama KO 6 Angel Granados
(Retains WBA Title)
Jorge Solis W 12 Mario Santiago
Argenis Mendez W 12 Martin Honorio
Terdsak Kokietgym W 12 Ricky Sismundo
Eloy Perez W 10 Gilberto Leon
Joksan Hernandez KO 9 Daniel Ruiz
Takahiro Ao KO 8 Whyber Garcia
Sergio Palomo KO 4 Oscar Sandoval
Satoshi Hosono KO 3 Sony Fony

Featherweights

Orlando Salido W 12 Cristobal Cruz
(Wins IBF Title)
Rafael Marquez KO 3 Israel Vazquez
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 2 Jean Sotelo
Ricardo Cordoba W 8 Jose Gutierrez
Daniel Ponce De Leon W 10 Cornelius Lock
Jesus Cuellar KO 11 Claudio Tapia
Matt Remillard KO 4 Carlos Rivera

Junior Featherweights

Toshiaki Nishioka KO 5 Balweg Bangoyan
(Retains WBC Title)
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 4 Shoji Kimura
Francisco Camacho W 12 Roberto Perez
Jesus Ruiz W 12 Cuauhtemoc Vargas
Arsen Martirosyan W 12 Jeremy Parodi
Sod Kokietgym W 12 T. I. Aguelo
Joaquin Cespedes W 10 Karim Quibir
Eduardo Garcia W Disq. 10 Eduardo Garcia
Massimo Deidda KO 10 David Chianella
Mcbute Sinyabi KO 6 Themba Lesiba
Tomas Rojas KO 4 Jorge Cardenas
Sergio Santillan KO 2 Darli Pires

Bantamweights

Yonnhy Perez D 12 Abner Mares
(Retains IBF Title)
Fernando Montiel KO 4 Hozumi Hasegawa
(Wins WBC Title)
Vic Darchinyan W 12 Eric Barcelona
Giovanni Jaramillo W 10 Xavier Urpi

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Junior welterweight Victor Ortiz hones in on Nate Campbell

Zulina Munoz W 10 Salma Canales
Hidenobu Honda KO 9 Kongthawat Sithsaithong
Diego Santillan KO 4 Guillermo Ojeda
Paulus Ambunda KO 3 Tendani Munyai
Tomoki Kameda KO 3 Narciso Lara
Michael Domingo KO 2 Luis Melendez
William Gonzalez KO 2 Jose Araiza
Takuya Kogawa KO 2 Numphonnoi Gym
Fred Mundraby KO 1 Matt Meredith

Junior Bantamweights

Hugo Cazares W 12 Nobuo Nashiro
Kohei Kono KO 11 Masafumi Tonomura
Daisuke Naito KO 5 Liempetch Sor Veerapol
Omar Narvaez W 12 Everth Briceno
Tenkai Tsunami W 10 Kayoko Ebata
Yota Sato KO 7 Go Onaga
Anduar Vargas W 8 Humberto Pena

Flyweights

Silvio Olteanu W 12 Bernard Inom
Andrea Sarritzu W 12 Alain Bonnel
Shinny Bayaar D 12 Ashley Sexton
Jerson Mancio W 10 Rocky Sardido

Junior Flyweights

Adrian Hernandez W 12 Jose Martinez
Jose Rodriguez W 10 Ivan Meneses

Strawweights

Wanheng Menayothin W 12 Ronelle Ferreras
Akira Yaegashi W 10 Kosuke Takeichi
Michael Landero KO 9 Kenichi Horikawa

Michael Katsidis KO 3 Kevin Mitchell

London, England: Katsidis gave his prospects a significant boost by blowing away East London-hero Mitchell in three rounds at Upton Park in what was certainly the most impressive showing of his career.

Mitchell, 25, THE RING's number-nine lightweight contender going in, arrived with 31-straight wins and 23 knockouts and was given the star treatment by promoter Frank Warren, who had seen his previous star, Amir Khan, defect to Golden Boy.

Katsidis moves in to finish Mitchell

PHOTO BY LEON NEAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

There was even talk of the popular cockney becoming the next Ricky Hatton, another Warren defector.

Mitchell, 134½, entered the ring cheered by approximately 15,000 fans who sang along to "Blowing Bubbles," the anthem of West Ham United (the local soccer team), and they had reason for optimism. Last December, Mitchell, 31-1 (23), outclassed Khan's conqueror, Breidis Prescott, showing sophisticated boxing skills to go with his undoubted power.

The 29-year-old Katsidis, 134¼, had not fought in eight months, and his 26-2 (21) record, his vulnerability to cuts, and his march-forward style seemed, at least to local pundits and bookmarkers, to put him a level below Mitchell's potential. Warren predicted a "landslide" for his man.

But, as it turned out, there were three more significant factors separating them. First, the globetrotting Greek-Australian had already proved himself at the elite level. Second, he'd trained harder than ever—a Spartan two-month camp in Thailand, while it later emerged that Mitchell's home-based training included late nights on the town and family rows. Third, the muscular Aussie was bigger and significantly stronger and was also far more elusive than previous form suggested.

The opening round saw Mitchell boxing intelligently behind his sharp left. Katsidis, who showed surprising speed of foot and a quick jab, bobbed and weaved as he attempted to close the gap. He twice had momentary success in cornering Mitchell, and his edge in strength and power was immediately apparent.

In the second, Mitchell found his groove, while Katsidis kept on missing and failed to lure Mitchell into errors by briefly boxing in retreat. Late in the round, Mitchell was cornered again, but this time he succeeded in firing back and then sliding out of danger, throwing dazzling combinations.

Between rounds Mitchell's trainer, Jimmy Tibbs, warned him: "Don't get caught on the ropes." That's precisely what happened early in the third. Katsidis slipped several jabs, stepped inside, and landed a heavy left hook to the jaw followed by another. Mitchell's legs stiffened and he fell back on the ropes. The British referee, Dave Paris, gave the Londoner a moment's respite, when, during the follow-up assault, he fell face-first into the ropes.

Instead of holding, running or, taking a knee, Mitchell elected to duke it out and landed several hard punches of his own. But the Australian was simply too powerful to be denied. He drove Mitchell into the ropes where they exchanged for a few seconds. A hard right started the rot, followed by a vicious left hook to the chin. Mitchell's eyes rolled and seven more meaty, accurate head blows left him side-on, hands down, body held up by the ropes, eyes vacant. Parris waved it off at the 1:57 mark.

Promoter: **Frank Warren**
(5-15-10)
Gavin Evans

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Floyd Mayweather

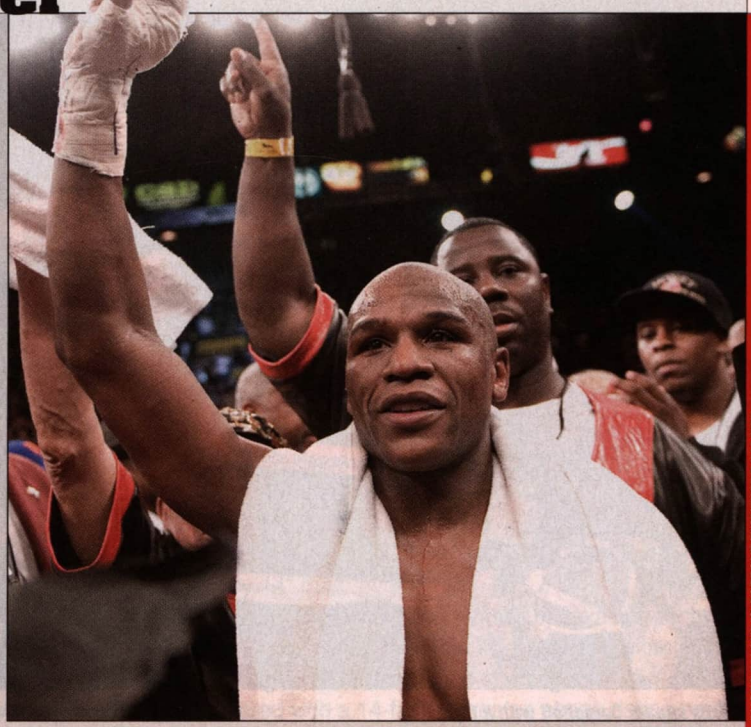


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Given Floyd Mayweather and Shane Mosley's respective places in the theoretical pound-for-pound ratings, their May Day showdown was the equivalent of a number-two vs. number-three midseason college football matchup. But for all the gladiator commercials, Tecate rebates, and Naazim Richardson towel-waving footage, Mayweather turned one of the most significant fights in years into a simple one-sided beating.

In the process, Mayweather did some things he's been criticized for not doing in the past. He took on a true welterweight who could punch. He made adjustments under pressure. He also came out of his defensive shell and took the fight to a strong-chinned opponent in an attempt to please the fans.

Rather than ruin a potential superfight with Manny Pacquiao by facing Mosley, as many feared, Mayweather only fueled the demand with his dismantling of Sugar Shane. The dominant performance propelled Mayweather back into the top position in The Ring's welterweight rankings, much to the ire of Pacquiao's fans. The victory also gave Mayweather a distinction he's had many times before: Fighter of the Month.

Victor Ortiz W 10 Nate Campbell

New York, New York: Ortiz is still looking for that spark that's eluded him since Marcos Maidana walloped him in June 2009. Losing to the Argentine slugger was one thing, but telling the referee he'd had enough earned the heavily hyped southpaw the dreaded "quitter" label.

Now, at the tender age of 23, Ortiz, Oxnard, California, is in the unenviable position of walking down the comeback trail. Wily veteran Campbell, Jacksonville, Florida, was supposed to provide a healthy test but also entered the fight with somewhat of a tarnished reputation. Many observers thought he too had quit when he suffered a cut left eye in the early going of a match with WBO 140-pound titleholder Timothy Bradley in August 2009.

Therefore, the chief undercard bout on the Amir Khan-Paul Malignaggi card at the Theater at Madison Square Garden featured two fighters at opposite ends of their careers looking for redemption. Both had a lot to prove, but neither came away with the result they desired. Ortiz, 27-2-1 (21), won easily but left a lot of questions to be answered. The 38-year-old Campbell, 33-6-1 (25) with 1 no-contest, looked shopworn and no longer competitive at an elite level.

The first few rounds held some intrigue, with Campbell, 139, stalking and Ortiz, 139, backing up and effectively countering. "The Galaxy Warrior" suffered a dubious knockdown in the first when referee Earl Brown (USA) ruled that what looked more like a push than a punch had knocked him down.

By the fourth round, however, things had become quite repetitive. Ortiz went from backing up to charging forward, and Campbell, looking every bit of his age, couldn't do much to prevent him. By the sixth round, Campbell, who'd already eaten a lot of punches, had developed a swelling under his left eye. He never seemed to be in danger of being stopped but didn't have the speed or reflexes to do much more than plod forward, take a punch or two, and then clinch.

Judges Julie Lederman (USA) and Don Trella (USA) each saw it 100-89 for Ortiz, as did THE RING, while judge Tom Schreck (USA) ruled it 99-90 for Ortiz.

The pampering Ortiz is receiving while being built back up is fine for the time being. But the looming question still hangs out there: What will happen when "Vicious Victor" again faces adversity? The bout with Campbell certainly offered no answers.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(5-15-10)
Joseph Santoliquito

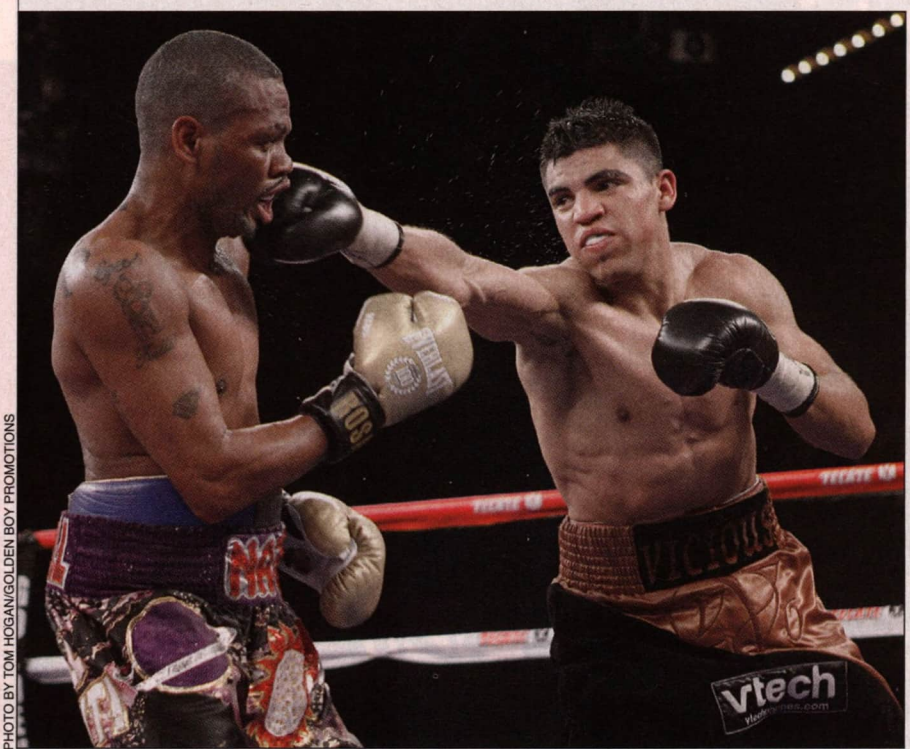


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Ortiz spears Campbell with a right

Hugo Cazares W 12 Nobuo Nashiro

Osaka, Japan: Last fall, Nashiro emerged from a grueling encounter with Cazares in his native Osaka, Japan, with a split draw and a junior bantamweight belt still around his waist. Seven months later, Cazares returned to the same venue and left no doubts, as he clearly outpointed Nashiro in another entertaining tilt at Prefectural Gymnasium.

Unlike their first fight, when the speed and accuracy of Nashiro hindered Cazares, Cazares prevailed behind a relentless pace and frequent changes in stance that seemed to confuse his adversary this time around. Nashiro, 13-2-1 (8), constantly moved forward and landed solid shots, but the busier Cazares, 31-6-2 (22), connected more frequently and had Nashiro reeling often.

Cazares, 115, Los Mochis, Mexico, appeared to take a tepid opening round with a flush left uppercut to the chin in the final 10 seconds. Nashiro, 115, tasted that punch throughout the fight, rarely seeming to have a counter in his arsenal.

The hometown favorite came back to win the second and third rounds, however, as he blocked most of Cazares' shots and connected frequently with right hands and left hooks off an accurate jab. A right hand buckled Cazares' legs early in the third, and in the final seconds of the round, Nashiro appeared to be yelling at his opponent as he aggressively stalked him.

Cazares, 32, recovered and began to take control early in the fourth, when he spun the 28-year-old Nashiro's head with a right hand. From then on, Nashiro's pace and speed gradually slowed. The bigger, stronger Cazares mostly threw looping shots from angles

Cazares slams Nashiro with a left

PHOTO BY SANKEI/GETTY IMAGES

on the outside, while Nashiro's movement and punches were both straight ahead. As Nashiro slowed, he increasingly struggled to counter Cazares.

Fighting out of a southpaw stance, Cazares opened the sixth with a three-punch combo finished by an uppercut that rocked the head of Nashiro, who then ate three unanswered hooks midway through the round. Targeting the body more frequently, Cazares continued to get the better of the exchanges as the rounds wore on, though the courageous Nashiro stayed in the pocket and continued to pressure Cazares.

Cazares nearly dropped Nashiro with a left thrown from a southpaw stance 1:10 into the 10th. Nashiro picked up the pace in a late rally attempt, leading to some terrific action in the final two rounds. The 12th was a candidate for Round of the Year as both men let it all hang out. They traded at close range for the entire three minutes, with Cazares appearing to get the round on volume and accuracy. It summed up the entire fight.

Glenn Feldman (USA) and Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) had it 117-111 for Cazares, while Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) scored it 115-113 for Nashiro. THE RING also saw it 117-111 for Cazares. The referee was Russell Mora (USA).

With the win, Cazares picked up the WBA "regular" junior bantamweight belt. The WBA also recognizes Vic Darchinyan as its "super" champion and Nonito Donaire as its "interim" champion. More importantly, Cazares moved up to number two in THE RING 115-pound ratings, while Nashiro dropped to fourth.

Promoter: **Mutoh Promotions**
(5-8-10)

Antonio Margarito W 10 Roberto Garcia

Aquascalientes, Mexico: For their ring walk, Margarito and some members of his team wore T-shirts protesting the controversial state law recently passed in Arizona targeting illegal immigrants. Ironically, Margarito was about to fight in a bullring in Mexico, the result of a deportation of sorts after "The Tijuana Tornado" had his U.S. license revoked in the aftermath of his hand-wraps scandal.

Margarito, 154, Tijuana, Mexico, made his comeback after 16 months on the shelf following his kayo loss to Shane Mosley and the fallout from the loaded hand wraps discovered by Mosley's trainer, Naazim Richardson, in the dressing room beforehand. While there are many in the boxing industry who are opposed to Margarito being allowed to fight anywhere, he's been quickly forgiven in Mexico, as was evidenced by the big crowd on hand at La Plaza de Toros Monumental for the "Latin Fury 14" main event.

The Mexican-born Garcia, 153, Weslaco, Texas, brought a decent resume and plenty of grit, but little else as the matchup wound up looking more like a glorified sparring session. Garcia, 28-3 (21), entered with a 14-fight unbeaten streak dating back

to 2004, and trained in Los Angeles, California, with Freddie Roach in preparation for Margarito.

Margarito, 38-6 (27), who sported fresh tattoos on his upper torso, started slowly and mechanically, relying mostly on his jab. He did connect with a solid three-punch combination capped by a right to the jaw that floored Garcia 1:15 before the bell. Margarito, who remained patient, didn't appear interested in pushing for the quick kayo after Garcia beat the count of referee Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico).

Garcia, who was sorely lacking in hand speed, remained tight and flat-footed in the second, while Margarito gradually loosened up. When Garcia did let his hands go in the early rounds, he usually landed, though none of his shots seemed to bother Margarito. Garcia, 30, spent more time clowning and talking smack to the 32-year-old Margarito, who often shrugged and rattled off a three-punch combo into Garcia's face.

Margarito's volume and hand speed seemed to increase as the rounds passed. It was his first fight under new trainer Robert Garcia (not to be confused with Margarito's opponent) after Margarito dumped Javier Capetillo, the fall guy in the hand wraps scandal. Garcia was penalized points for a headbutt in the eighth round and a low blow in the 10th.

Arturo Moreno (Mexico) scored it 100-88, Ruben Carrion (USA) had it 99-90, and Chris Tellez (USA) saw it 99-89, all for Margarito. THE RING scored it 100-87 for Margarito, who is trying to get reinstated in the U.S.

Regardless, Top Rank boss Bob Arum has mentioned Margarito as a possible opponent for superstar Manny Pacquiao. Other possibilities include rematches with Sergio Martinez or Miguel Cotto, though if a U.S. license doesn't materialize, they might have to make sure there's a bullring available somewhere in Mexico first.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Promociones Zanfer**
(5-8-10)

Margarito returns with win over Garcia

PHOTO BY JAIME LOPEZ/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

Jorge Solis W 12 Mario Santiago

Aquascalientes, Mexico: Santiago was four inches shorter than Solis, but supposedly had a two-inch reach advantage. It didn't appear that Santiago had any advantages or answers against the tricky Solis in their junior lightweight showdown on the "Latin Fury 14" undercard at a windy La Plaza de Toros Monumental.

Solis, 130, Guadalajara, Mexico, needed a few rounds to adjust to the southpaw Santiago, 130, Ponce, Puerto Rico. When the 30-year-old Solis found his range, his hand speed and accurate counterpunching thoroughly befuddled Santiago, 31, who suffered his second clear-cut decision loss in three months.

Santiago, 21-3-1 (14), got off to a decent start in the early rounds, which were close, awkward, and tough to score. Santiago pressed the action, throwing mostly to the body, while Solis focused on trying to counter. Santiago appeared to be a bit sharper and more accurate in the first two rounds. Solis, 39-2-2 (28), came back to take the third with the help of a three-punch combo, then a two-punch salvo, then a three-punch combo late in the round, most of which landed and left Santiago wobbly at the bell.

Both fighters landed cleanly in the fourth, when Solis began to get more aggressive. Solis was in control by the fifth, when Santiago began backing up and becoming more hesitant, a result of tasting too many counters. Solis punished Santiago's body in the sixth and then began moving forward in an attempt to please the fans in the seventh. It was a sudden role reversal from the early rounds as Solis advanced, landing a steady stream of right hands while Santiago backed up and looked to counter.

Santiago tried a few different tactics as the rounds wore on. He started the ninth on the offensive, but was backing up again after taking a flush right uppercut, and ref Rafael Ramos (Puerto Rico) took a point from Santiago in the round for a rabbit punch. Santiago tried jabbing and moving in the 10th. He tried playing to the pro-Solis crowd and headbutting Solis in the 12th. None of it worked as Solis rocked Santiago several times but didn't have enough firepower to finish it early.

Ignacio Robles (Panama) scored it 119-108, while Dr. Rueben Garcia (USA) and Robert Hoyle (USA) each had it 118-109. THE RING agreed with Garcia and Hoyle's tallies. For Solis, who is rated seventh by THE RING, the dominant performance was his first defense of the dubious WBA "interim" lightweight belt, which was created despite beltholder Takashi Uchiyama of Japan being quite healthy and active.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Promociones Zanfer**
(5-8-10)

Urbano Antillon W 10 Rene Gonzalez

Aquascalientes, Mexico: A late injury to original Antillon opponent Brandon Rios squashed an anticipated matchup between two up-and-coming, all-action lightweights on the "Latin Fury 14" undercard. Last-minute sub Gonzalez proved to be a decent replacement, even if Antillon won almost every round at La Plaza de Toros Monumental.

The Mexican-born Antillon, 135, Maywood, California, used a hammering jab and constant pressure to smother a determined but overmatched Gonzalez, 135, Managua, Nicaragua, in a WBC eliminator. For Antillon, 28-1 (20), it was his second win since last July's one-punch kayo loss to Miguel Acosta and his second win since replacing trainer Rudy Hernandez with Abel Sanchez. For Gonzalez, 27-2-1 (21), Antillon was a significant step up in class.

Despite questions about his chin, Antillon has maintained his straight-ahead, defense-as-an-afterthought style. He often squares up with his opponents as he works his way inside, which leaves him open to counters. Gonzalez tagged him throughout, but his shots had little on them after the midway point.

That wasn't the case early, though, as Gonzalez survived a fight-opening flurry from Antillon before stunning the crowd favorite with a counter right 30 seconds before the bell. Antillon barely stayed upright, quickly cleared his head, and then came back to drop Gonzalez suddenly with a jab to the jaw in the final 10 seconds of the round.

Gonzalez, who got up quickly, was rocked like a bobblehead doll throughout the second round by the jabs of Antillon, who also pounded the body well. Gonzalez, 24, began to gain his composure in the third, when he offered more lateral movement and threw more punches at the onrushing Antillon, 27. Gonzalez clearly took the fourth, when he limited Antillon's potent jab by taking fewer backward steps and engaging at close range.

The two continued to trade in a fifth round that saw several quality exchanges, but Gonzalez was beginning to slow under Antillon's constant pressure. Regaining control, Antillon was awarded a questionable knockdown in the seventh by ref Juan Jose Ramirez (Mexico) when Gonzalez's legs went out from under him as he attempted to dodge a body shot in a wet corner. Antillon picked up the pace in an attempt to close the show, but ate several counters.

Antillon dominated the final three rounds, when he persistently pounded the head, body, and arms of a less mobile Gonzalez, nearly dropping him with combinations in the eighth and 10th rounds. At the bell, Antillon sported a mouse under his right eye, while Gonzalez had swelling under both eyes.

Nery Jimenez (Mexico) scored it 100-90, while Arturo Moreno (Mexico) and Pedro Moran (Mexico) each had it 99-91, all for Antillon. THE RING scored it 99-89 for Antillon, who has been mentioned as a possible opponent for Anthony Peterson later this year.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Promociones Zanfer**
(5-8-10)

Toshiaki Nishioka KO 5 Balweg Bangoyan

Tokyo, Japan: On the Fernando Montiel-Hozumi Hasegawa undercard at Nihon Budokan, Nishioka scored his fourth kayo in as many defenses as he took care of the green Bangoyan to keep his WBC junior featherweight belt.

The southpaw Nishioka, 122, Tokyo, Japan, cruised through the opening round by using his longer jab to keep the overly

Nishioka watches the ref count over Bangoyan

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

cautious Bangoyan, 122, Caburan, Philippines, at a distance. With a minute to go in the round, Nishioka nearly toppled the 23-year-old "Davao Hitman" with a straight left to the face.

Bangoyan, 15-1 (6), increased his aggression and pace in the second, when he landed a terrific counter right to the jaw in the final minute that momentarily stunned Nishioka, 36-4-3 (23). Bangoyan landed well to the body throughout the second and third, while the 33-year-old Nishioka seemed content to throw one bomb at a time.

Nishioka, best known for his third-round stoppage of Jhonny Gonzalez in May 2009, became more aggressive in the fourth, when he landed frequently with his southpaw left. Bangoyan was docked a point in the round by referee Gelacio Perez (Mexico) for repeated low blows.

Thirty-three seconds into the fifth, Nishioka connected with a perfectly timed left to the face thrown from an angle. Bangoyan hit the canvas, beat the count, and tried to continue on despite still being in a fog. Nishioka bombarded his opponent relentlessly until Perez finally stepped in 1:14 into the round.

At the time of the stoppage, Noppharat Sricharoen (Thailand) had it 40-35, Dong-Ahn Park (South Korea) 39-36, and Malcolm Bulner (Australia) 38-37, all for Nishioka, who sported a bruise under his right eye afterward. THE RING agreed with Bulner's tally.

"Bangoyan could punch," said Nishioka, who is ranked second at 122 pounds by THE RING. "As he had predicted, he made a do-or-die attack against me. So, I became careful from the second round and properly kept the distance to hurt him. I'm happy to score four straight defenses by knockout."

Promoter: **Teiken Promotions**

(4-30-10)

Tomasz Adamek W 12 Chris Arreola

Ontario, California: This was an excellent heavyweight matchup, one of the best that could be made in a division dominated by residents of former Soviet republics who stand straight up and are generally less than exciting.

It lived up to its billing. The matchup pitting the aggressive Arreola, who, partly because he usually comes in about 20 pounds over his ideal fighting weight, likes to get it done early, against former light heavyweight and cruiserweight Adamek, 41-1 (27), who uses the entire ring as he fights in spirited bursts.

This was only the third heavyweight contest for Polish-born Adamek, who, at age 34, appeared to be making a desperate lunge for the more lucrative heavyweight loot before Father Time sends him into another line of work. But Adamek didn't look desperate in the ring. He looked like a smart, smallish heavyweight with decent but not overwhelming speed who throws tricky combinations hard enough to bust up his opponents. He proved again he could take a heavyweight punch and keep on keeping on. The result was a close, exciting contest that rightfully went to Adamek by majority decision, though New Jersey judge Joseph Pasquale scored

Adamek is on target with a right

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Angulo brutalizes Julio with a right

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

it a laughable 117-111 for the Polish transplant who fights out of (guess where?) New Jersey. (See Magoos in the "Digging Deep" column.)

Arreola, 28-2 (25), fighting in friendly territory only a few miles from his Riverside home, came in at 250½ versus Adamek's 217. Arreola, 29, a good but not spectacular puncher, came out throwing powerful, speedy jabs while working the body. There were plenty of feisty exchanges. Arreola complained later that he injured his left hand in the fifth round, and that's how it looked to observers. He kept using it, but pretty much abandoned his jab. He also injured his right around the 10th round, he said. Afterward, communicating with his customary F-rated vocabulary, he said Adamek deserved the victory.

Adamek was hurt on several occasions, but wisely clinched or took more distance as he cleared his head and then came back with combinations. Arreola disputed claims that Adamek had a heavyweight punch or a heavyweight chin, but said he had a "heavyweight heart."

Adamek and his Main Events promoter will now look for an alphabet title, but HBO, unaccustomed lately to showing an action-packed heavyweight contest, might prod the fighters into a rematch. If there is one, Arreola promoter Dan Goossen has already agreed to stage it in New Jersey.

Television: **HBO**
Promoters: **Goossen-Tutor, Main Events**
(4-24-10)
Ivan Goldman

Alfredo Angulo KO II Joel Julio

Ontario, California: On paper, Julio, 35-4 (31), has now lost three of his last four and looks like a fighter on his way down. In the flesh, he put on a good show and fought well, moving hands and feet and throwing hard combinations, but his opponent was the indestructible Angulo, who just couldn't be hurt and kept coming and coming and coming.

Those Julio combinations have taken out 31 of his 39 opponents early, and he was seen as an indestructible force himself, an up-and-coming *ShoBox* star, until he got outpointed and outsmarted by cagey Carlos Quintana four years ago. He's improved his boxing skills since then and, at age 25, is still a junior middleweight threat.

Now for Angulo: Not terribly quick or tricky, the man remains a nightmare, never changes expression, never stops trying to kayo his opponent, and remembers to slam the body. Doesn't seem to care much about what's coming back at him. His one loss was to talented boxer-puncher Kermit Cintron, and his camp claims he was ill before that fight. Angulo, 18-1 (15), who laced on his first set of gloves at the advanced age of 17 (he's now 27), is yet another contender for the crown of Next Great Mexican Hero.

Maybe. Angulo, 153¾, Coachella, California, via Mexico, seems like a nice enough young man, and his dogged style has to be terribly discouraging to opponents, especially when they catch him solid and he just keeps going forward. But hard-hitting tough guys with leaky defense tend to peak early. In the meantime, he's fun to watch. Toward the end of this

one, he fought with his mouth open and looked to be getting impatient as well as tired, throwing wider shots that were easier for Julio, 153¼, to pick off. But in round 11, he caught Julio with a perfect short right hand, leveraging all his weight behind it, to score the only knockdown. Julio, Miami, Florida, via Colombia, beat the count, but referee Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) called it over anyway. Julio complained he was okay, and the stoppage looked a little quick to some observers But Julio was behind on all three cards, and he wasn't going to kayo "El Perro" (The Dog).

Angulo promoter Gary Shaw said he'd be delighted to match his fighter with Antonio Margarito, but only if the disgraced "Tijuana Tornado" can get himself licensed in the U.S.

Television: **HBO**
Promoters: **Goossen-Tutor, Main Events**
(4-24-10)
Ivan Goldman

Mikkel Kessler W 12 Carl Froch

Herning, Denmark: Kessler, 167, Monaco by way of Denmark, overcame a nasty cut over his left eye to win a hard-fought unanimous decision against Froch, 167¼, Nottingham, England. The victory earned Kessler the WBC super middleweight title (his fourth alphabet belt at 168 pounds) and kept him alive in the Showtime "Super Six World Boxing Classic."

The card of judge Guido Cavalleri (Italy) card was the most accurate at 115-113, while Daniel Van de Wiele (Belgium) and Roger Tillieman (Belgium) scored the action 116-112 and 117-111, respectively, all for Kessler.

"I thought I did enough to win," said Froch, 26-1 (20). "I had him hurt two or three times. Actually, I know I had him badly hurt three times. It's my fault though. If I had put it to him more and if I had sustained the pressure, I could have gotten him out of there. No one has been able to do that. I wasn't able to do that."

Froch believed the 10,000 fans that'd packed into the MCH Arena in Herning to cheer their Danish hero had something to do with Kessler's win. "It was very close but, if we were in my hometown in Nottingham, it would have gone my way with the same scores. There will be people who say it was robbery, but I won't take anything from Mikkel Kessler. I thought I did enough, but that's boxing," said Froch, 32, who was making his third defense.

Kessler, 43-2 (32), struggled with Froch's awkward style in the early rounds, but under advisement of new trainer Jimmy Montoya, "The Viking Warrior" gradually worked his way into the fight. Despite falling to the canvas in the fifth—ruled a slip by referee Michael Griffin (Canada)—Kessler was soon matching Froch blow for blow.

Froch, although he was moving backwards for much of the fight due to Kessler's forward motion, appeared stronger and quicker than Kessler and was very successful with sneaky right leads. His best moment may have come during the 10th when he tore open a horrible gash over Kessler's left eyebrow. Kessler inflicted damage, too, especially during the eighth when it appeared he might have broken Froch's nose. The final two rounds provided the best action of the Showtime series thus far, as both fighters battled down the stretch.

Kessler was ecstatic after the bout, even if his eyebrow was laid open like a fish mouth. He was especially happy to have put his previous bout, a one-sided loss to Andre Ward, behind him. "I had a lot of people from my country say that I was finished. It is nice to get my belt back and show them," said Kessler.

Kessler picked up his first point in the Showtime tournament. Allan Green, who has replaced Jermain Taylor in the series, is scheduled to be Kessler's next opponent.

Perhaps the best thing about the tournament is that the losing fighters are thrown back into action very quickly. Had the 31-year-old Kessler lost to Ward under any other circumstance, American viewers might not have seen him again for a long time, if ever. Thanks to the Showtime Super Six tournament, we were able to watch him rebound from a loss in very impressive fashion.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Sauerland Event**
(4-24-10)

Kessler moves in on Froch

PHOTO BY HENNING BAGGER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Lucian Bute KO 3 Edison Miranda

Montreal, Canada: Bute's spectacular one-punch kayo of "Pantera" Miranda, 167, Carolina, Puerto Rico via Colombia, added more credibility to his number-one ranking in what is arguably boxing's most talent-rich division. For Bute, 30, the Miranda knockout in front of 13,682 spectators at the Bell Centre came hot on the heels of his dramatic kayo of Librado Andrade courtesy of a single bodypunch. And while he might be a smooth counterpunching boxer, one look at his 26-0 (21) record makes it obvious that he's also one of the best hitters at 168 pounds.

It can also be concluded the southpaw Bute, 167¼, Montreal, Canada, via Romania, is one of the best bodypunchers in the game today. He paralyzed Andrade with a left hook to the belly last November. And before Bute's perfectly executed uppercut to Miranda's chin, Bute had virtually rendered the Colombian desperate and helpless with a series of similarly crippling body blows.

Granted, after losses to Kelly Pavlik, Arthur Abraham, and most recently Andre Ward, no one was mistaking the powerful-but-limited Miranda for formidable opposition. Essentially a one-armed fighter with a dangerously powerful right, Miranda, 29, at best held a puncher's chance against a significantly larger Bute, who also had the superior ring skills.

Still, as in the Andrade bout, it was the sheer precision in which he carried out the victory that made Bute look so impressive.

Miranda, 33-5 (29), had his moments in round one, scoring well with lead rights. But the 6'2" Bute surprised many when he opened the fight showing unusual aggression and walking down his shorter 5'10" foe, while a normally aggressive Miranda circled and jockeyed for position.

While close, Bute took the first stanza based on a superior jab and some well-timed body work, but the fight looked poised to heat up in the second as Miranda went to work firing heavy artillery. The Colombian successfully traded jabs early, but was most effective forging ahead and scoring with a number of right hands that consistently reached Bute, earning Miranda the round.

But early in round three, any hopes that Miranda might produce some fireworks were quickly dashed when Bute stood him up with a left hook to the ribs. Clearly hurt by the blow, Miranda thumped his chest in defiance, but another left hook to the body from Bute seconds later had him stopping mid-ring with his hands held akimbo as he stared at his tormentor.

Bute knew he had his man hurt, but needed to do a little more to set up the win. As though the second bodyblow had not only taken the wind out of him but his senses as well, Miranda charged forward into Bute's line of fire and literally leaned into the knockout blow as Bute unleashed the uppercut with blinding speed.

Up at the count of six, Miranda wobbled back to the ropes and referee Ernie Sharif (USA) wisely stopped it at the 1:22 mark.

The bout, broadcast on HBO, was aired first as part of a co-feature in a split-site broadcast that also showcased Sergio Martinez' decision victory against Kelly Pavlik. It was the expressed hope of Bute's brain trust, InterBox, to feature their fighter in an autumn showdown with Pavlik. But with Martinez undermining that plan, Bute will now have to bide his time as another viable opponent emerges—presumably from the Super Six tournament that is expected to crown a winner by mid-2011. In the meantime, Bute is scheduled to return to his native Romania in July for an optional defense against a yet-to-be-named opponent.

Television: **HBO**
Promoters: **InterBox, Goossen-Tutor**
(4-17-10)
Paul Salgado

Miranda was no match for Bute

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

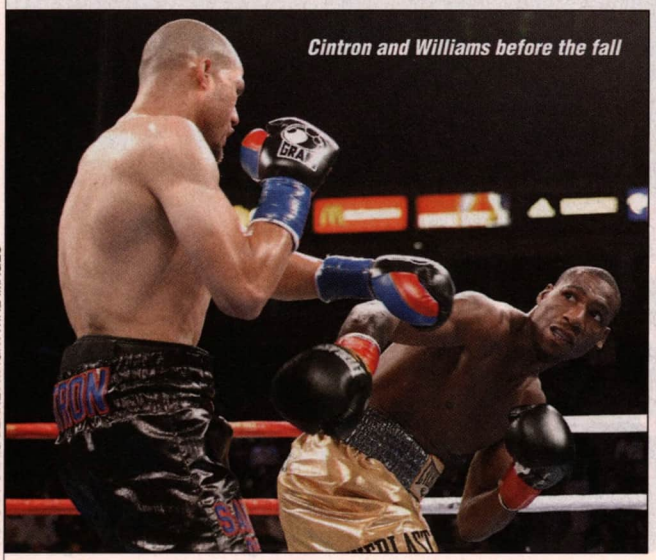
Paul Williams Tech. Dec. 4 Kermit Cintron

Carson, California: Not a good night for anyone at the Home Depot Center, including "winner" Williams, 152½, Augusta, Georgia. And it was such a promising match. Two confident, action fighters willing to take each other on in the exciting junior middleweight division. You can't ask for more.

When they spent the first few rounds feeling each other out, it just heightened anticipation for the leather that was sure to fly any minute. Cintron, 32-3-1 (28), looked a little sharper, but southpaw Williams' top attribute might be his ability to pressure his opponent without tiring, giving him no chance to breathe, and once he opened the spigot, the character of the fight would change. Cintron, 154, Reading, Pennsylvania, would either get run over or his own speed and power would prevail.

The first three largely uneventful rounds were close and not easy to score, with differences of opinion on whether shots landed cleanly or were partially slipped or blocked. Early in the fourth round they started to tangle in earnest, with each fighter landing and neither willing to back down. But long, tall Williams, 39-1 (27), slipped and went down. Cintron tripped over him, and everyone watched amazed as Murphy's Law prevailed. Cintron sailed through the ropes like a missile, landing on a table and slipping off to hit the concrete. He was clearly shaken, and ring physicians scrambled over and held him in place, telling him not to move. He'd complained he hit his head, but said he wanted to continue. Had he disregarded instructions and jumped to his feet, the bout may well have continued, and had he been acquainted with California rules, it's likely he'd have given it a try rather than be wheeled out to an ambulance and suffer a perplexing loss.

Association of Boxing Commissions rules would have called this a technical draw, but California says that once the bell to begin the fourth round begins you instruct the judges to score the incomplete round and the scorecards dictate the winner. The California judges were all over the map, with scores of 40-36 (James Jen-Kin) and 39-37 (Fritz Werner) for Williams and 40-36 (Jerry Cantu) for Cintron. Said Williams, "I know (Cintron) wanted to fight. I know I wanted to fight. It's a strange way to get a win. But I wish the best for him and his family."



Cintron and Williams before the fall

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Williams' promoter, Dan Goossen, hoping to get Floyd Mayweather or Manny Pacquiao in the ring, immediately ruled out a rematch. Meanwhile, Cintron promoter Lou DiBella had nothing good to say about the California rule that screwed his fighter and issued a protest a few days later in hopes of getting the result changed to a no-decision.

The referee was Lou Moret (California).

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Goossen-Tutor**
(5-8-10)
Ivan Goldman

Robert Guerrero KO 8 Robert Arrieta

Las Vegas, Nevada: Headlining a night of comebacks—for fighter, TV, and venue—"The Ghost" Guerrero made his return to the ring after an eight-month lapse to deal with his wife's life-threatening battle with leukemia.

In comparison, Guerrero's "fight" with Arrieta, 134, Santa Rosa, Argentina, was about as intimidating as a runny nose, for run is what Arrieta did—when he wasn't hitting the canvas, that is—during the less than eight rounds it took for referee Jay Nady (USA) to call a halt to the track meet.

After the initial warm-up round, Guerrero, 135, Gilroy, California, found an easy home for his jab and straight left hand. The race was on.

Arrieta, 35-16-4 (17), hopped on his bicycle and pedaled away while Guerrero, 26-1-1 (18), hoofed after him. In the second and third rounds, Guerrero unseated Arrieta for knockdowns. For the next four rounds, the southpaw Guerrero chased, landing jab after jab and just about anything else he wanted behind his right. Meanwhile, Arrieta, unable or unwilling to stand his ground or launch his own attack, snacked on jabs while in retreat until the eighth, when a big straight left dropped him for the third time.

Arrieta, 34, beat the count, but his legs didn't. When the fight resumed, the 27-year-old Guerrero tore into him, prompting Nady to call it quits at the 29-second mark. Guerrero was ahead unanimously on all three scorecards at the time of the stoppage.

"I felt great and just wanted to get some rounds in," said Guerrero, fighting as a lightweight for the first time. "I worked my jab and eventually got him out of there."

Campaigning now as a full-fledged lightweight, Guerrero is targeting the winner of the Juan Manual Marquez-Juan Diaz rematch July 31 in Vegas. "I made a statement tonight and want the winner of that fight," said Guerrero.

Equally significant to Guerrero's return was the comeback by Telefutura with its long-running *Solo Boxeo Tecate* series, after a year-and-a-half hiatus. Capping off the night of returns was the Tropicana Casino & Resort, which staged its first boxing show in nearly two years and just its second card in 11 years.

Television: **Telefutura**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(4-30-10) ■

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 (Continued from Page 26)

fied nursing assistant so he could care for him. He's taking classes at Houston Community College, with the eventual goal of transferring to the University of Houston and getting a bachelor's degree in political science. He practices yoga. He's at Bible study every Wednesday and in a church pew on Sundays.

"Omar Henry, he's just so easy to work with," said trainer Hylon Williams Sr. "He goes with the flow. He's still hungry. He's still humble. Some of these guys, they get to 8-0, 9-0, even 1-0, and they get content and complacent and think the world revolves around them. One of his great attributes is he's still hungry, and he's remained grounded."

Henry grew up in Chicago, where he dabbled in basketball, wrestling, and even gymnastics at one point. He was drawn to the fight game, however, and became a boyhood fan of Mike Tyson and Roy Jones. That's fitting, considering his pro style seems to be equal parts Tyson and Jones, given his power, speed, and flashy skills.

While no one in Henry's family boxed, there were plenty of street brawlers in the clan. That includes Henry. "I can say I never lost a street fight," he said, laughing. "Boxing came natural to me. I can't even count how many fights I had. All I know is I won all of them by knockout."

At age 16, Henry broke the family trend and took up fighting as a sport. Shortly thereafter, Henry talked his mother into letting him move in with an older sister in Houston, where he hoped to get better training. He found it at the talent-rich Savannah Boxing Club in southwest Houston.

Henry had a five-year, 65-bout apprenticeship under Williams Sr. He said he won all but five of those fights. His amateur run included a stint in the USA Boxing Elite Program at Northern Michigan University and four state Golden Gloves titles.

Henry turned pro in July 2008 under the guidance of manager/trainer Jay Johns, who decided to take a chance on the black Puerto Rican youngster. After winning his first four fights by first-round kayo, Henry was signed by Top Rank and high-powered manager Cameron Dunkin, which was a bit surprising considering Henry was never a high-profile amateur. Dunkin and Top Rank matchmaker Brad Goodman are on board with Team Henry's patient approach.

"As an amateur, most people wouldn't know who Omar Henry was," said

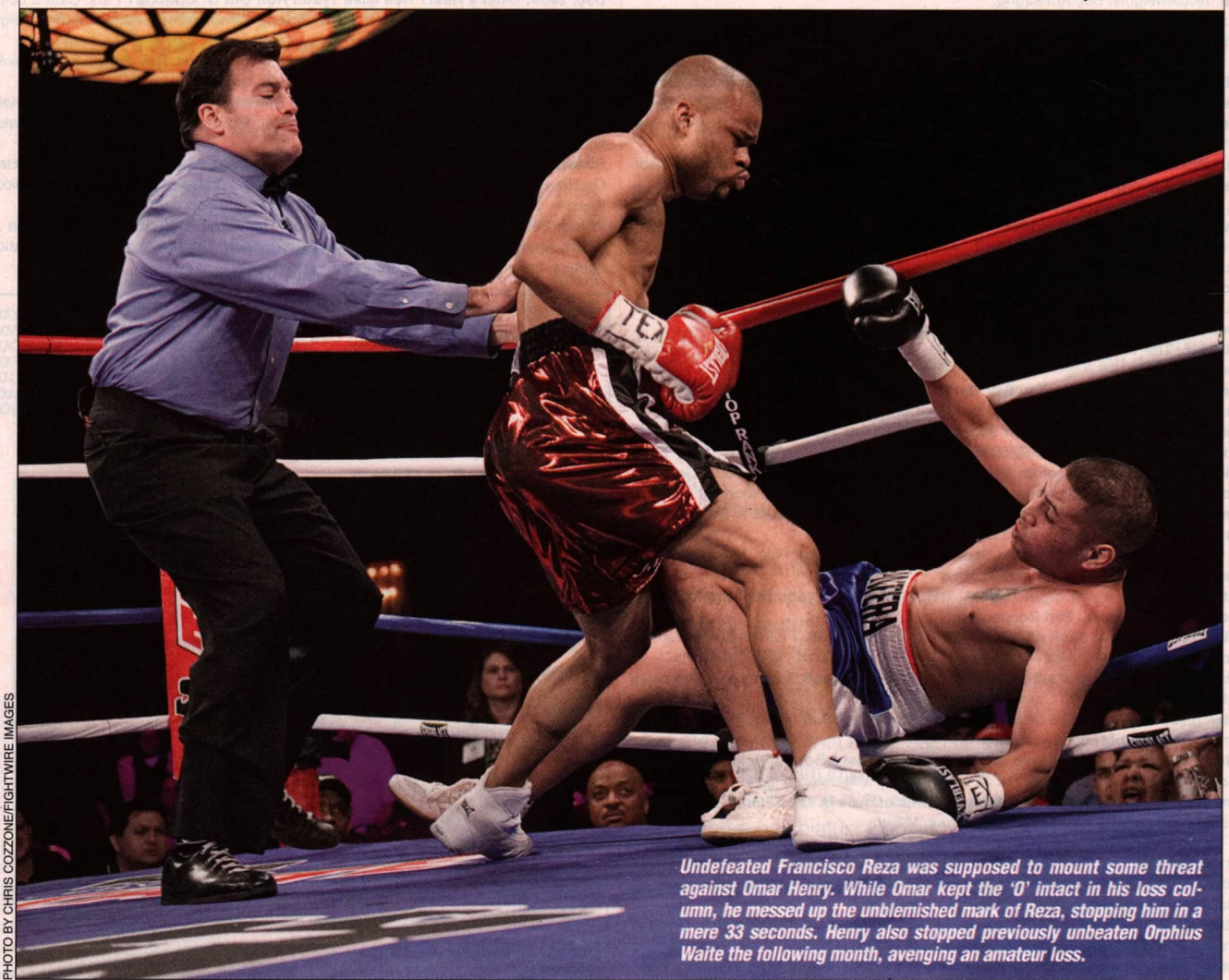

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Undefeated Francisco Reza was supposed to mount some threat against Omar Henry. While Omar kept the '0' intact in his loss column, he messed up the unblemished mark of Reza, stopping him in a mere 33 seconds. Henry also stopped previously unbeaten Orphius Waite the following month, avenging an amateur loss.

Johns, who stepped aside as Henry's trainer after seven fights in favor of Williams Sr., but remains Henry's co-manager. "Danny Jacobs, Shawn Porter, Demetrius Andrade, and Charles Hatley—those were the big guys in the amateurs at that weight. Nobody knew who Omar was. He was a diamond in the rough. But he was always working hard. He was always willing to try it again and try it again."

Oddly enough, Henry was no kayo artist in the unpaid ranks. Like many amateurs, he relied on his hand speed for quick connects under the computerized scoring system. When he turned pro, though, Henry was taught by Johns to put his body weight behind his shots and sit down on his punches. "I knew he would have power," Johns said, "but I didn't know he'd have eight knockouts in nine fights."

Not even the death of a close relative has been able to slow Henry's rise.

After briefly returning to Chicago to graduate from high school in 2005, Henry moved in with uncle Joseph Richards upon coming back to Houston. Known around the Savannah Boxing Club as "Unc," Richards was one of Henry's staunchest supporters. Suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure, Richards was blind in one eye and missing a leg and required regular care from his nephew.

Richards passed away in February 2009. Though stung by the loss, Henry returned in June with a one-round blowout of Alfonso Gonzalez.

"Omar's a real fun guy," said Williams Sr. "He's not really a loner, but he keeps to himself. He doesn't run with a big crowd. He's very articulate, does a lot of reading. He tries to find the bright spot in every situation. Some people let tragedies in their life bring them down, but Omar used his as a steppingstone."

Last fall, much to his surprise, Henry got his biggest career boost to date. Manny Pacquiao wanted to hire Henry as a sparring partner in preparation for last November's super-bout with Miguel Cotto due to Henry's similarities to the Puerto Rican star. Henry turned down the offer, saying he was too busy with classes. Word quickly got around the Internet that some kid stiffed the sport's top draw.

"That really blindsided me," Henry said of the unprecedented amount of attention that followed. "I had no idea it was going to get that big of a reaction at all. I was shocked by that. But it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I felt like it made me more famous. It gave me more attention. Like, who is this guy who turned down Manny Pacquiao? Then they started looking at my clips."

And the demand to see Henry exploded, at least among hardcore fans. Top Rank obliged, putting Henry on televised Fox Sports Net undercards in his last two bouts. In March, Henry crushed previously unbeaten Francisco Reza in 33 seconds. The following month, he took out unbeaten Orphius Waite in the second round with a highlight-reel overhand right. Waite had beaten Henry in the 2007 National Golden Gloves quarterfinals.

"He's progressing really fast, but this is not an overnight thing," Johns said of Henry, who was scheduled to meet unbeaten Foster Nkodo, 5-0 (1), as this issue went to press. "This is a marathon. I want him to take it step by step. Every guy is a little different. His amateur career wasn't very long, so we want to take our time with it. I'm an old-school guy, so I want to take it slow. As slow as the media will let us."

Henry's nickname is "O. Henry." That's fitting, considering O. Henry was a master of the short story, and thus far, most of the Chicago native's fights have been quick reads. Henry wants his career to be more like a novel, and one with a happy ending at that. He doesn't expect it to come quickly or easily, so he's patiently putting in the work now, with his sights set on a future that will arrive when Henry is ready for it.

"It's no disrespect to Miguel Cotto—he's still one of my favorite fighters—but I feel with my skill set, my name is going to be bigger than Miguel Cotto eventually," he said. "I want to carve out my own legacy, carve out my own name.

"I feel like I'm going to be the future of boxing." ■

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Hall of Fame Profile

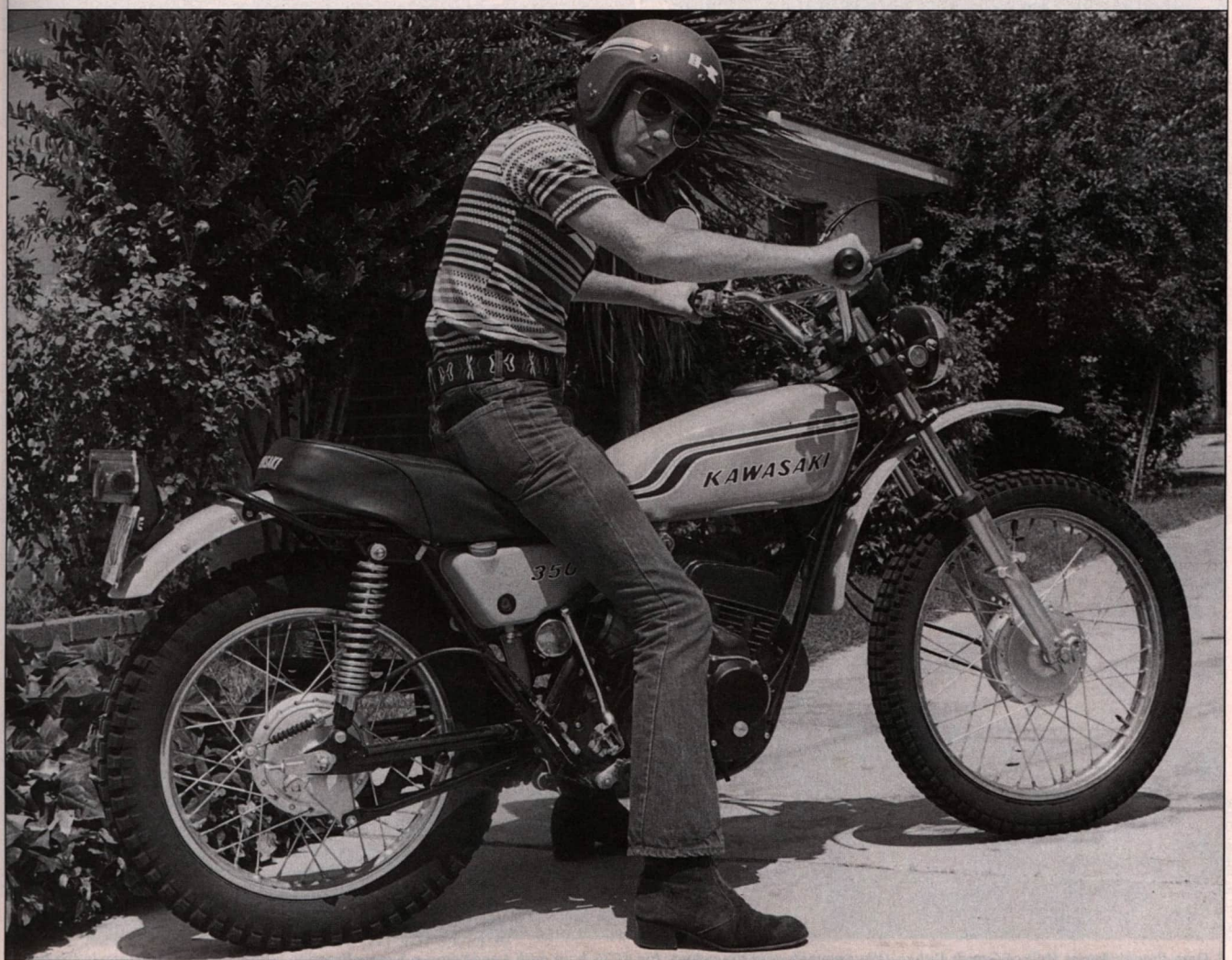
THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Danny Lopez

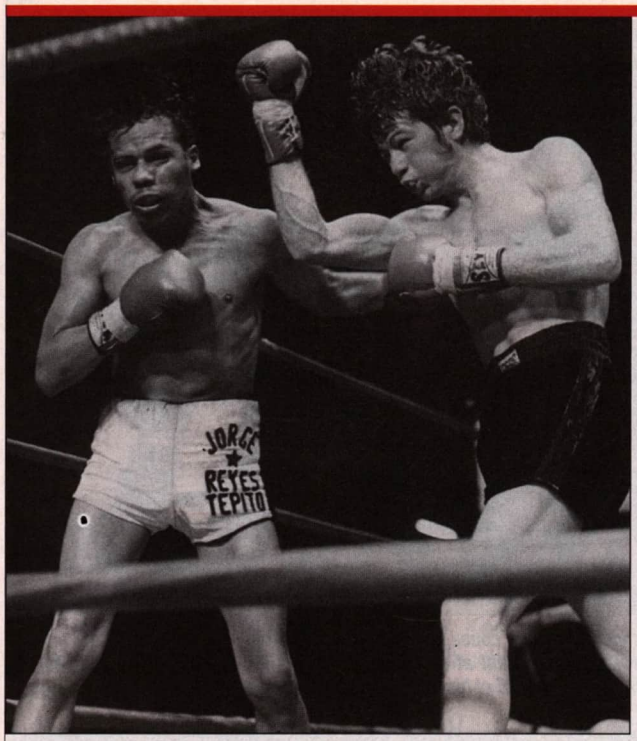
Birthdate: June 6, 1952
Birthplace: Fort Duchesne, Utah
Nickname: "Little Red"
Weight Class: Featherweight
Record: 42-6 (39)
Title Held: WBC featherweight
Best Performances: David Kotey (W 15, KO 6), Mike Ayala (KO 15), Sean O'Grady (KO 4), Ruben Olivares (KO 7), Art Hafey (KO 7), Roberto Castanon (KO 2), Arturo Pineda (KO 4), Kenji Endo (KO 2), Benny Rodriguez (KO 1), Chucho Castillo (KO 2)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 2010
Background: One of the hardest punching featherweights of all-time ... Of mixed Ute Indian, Mexican, and Irish heritage ... Spent most of hardscrabble childhood in foster homes ... Began amateur career at age 16 ... Followed older brother, welterweight contender Ernie "Big Red" Lopez, into the pros, making his debut in May 1971 at Los Angeles' legendary Olympic Auditorium, a venue where he would soon become a fan favorite ... Won first 22 bouts, 21 by knockout, including victories over the previously undefeated pair of Arturo Pineda and Benny Rodriguez ... Streak ended when he was stopped by "Schoolboy" Bobby Chacon in May 1974 in front of a crowd of 16,000 at the Los Angeles Sports Arena ... Suffered defeats in two (Shig Fukuyama and Octavio Gomez) of his next three bouts following Chacon loss, but would not lose again until 1980 ... December '75 brawl with Ruben Olivares saw him down before rallying back to kayo Olivares in the 7th round ... Stopped previously undefeated and future WBA lightweight titleholder Sean O'Grady in February '76 and avenged loss to Octavio "Famoso" Gomez in April ... Won WBC featherweight title via unanimous 15-round decision over David Kotey in front of approximately 100,000 fans at the Accra Sports Stadium in Ghana ... Exciting give-and-take style ("I only knew how to fight one way ... I'd just keep punching until I knocked my opponent out") soon made him a staple of network TV ... Tallied eight successful title defenses (seven by knockout), the most famous of which was a 15th-round knockout of Mike Ayala that was selected as THE RING's 1979 Fight of the Year ... Lost title to Salvador Sanchez in February 1980 ... Retired after losing rematch with Sanchez but returned for one final bout in January '92, hanging up his gloves for good after being knocked out in the second round ... Worked construction jobs after retiring from the ring ... Selected by THE RING in 2003 as the 26th best puncher of all-time.

Danny pictured with big brother Ernie Lopez around the time of Danny's pro debut. Ernie, known as "Big Red," was a world-class welterweight who fought most of the top 147-pounders of his day but could not beat world champion Jose Napoles.

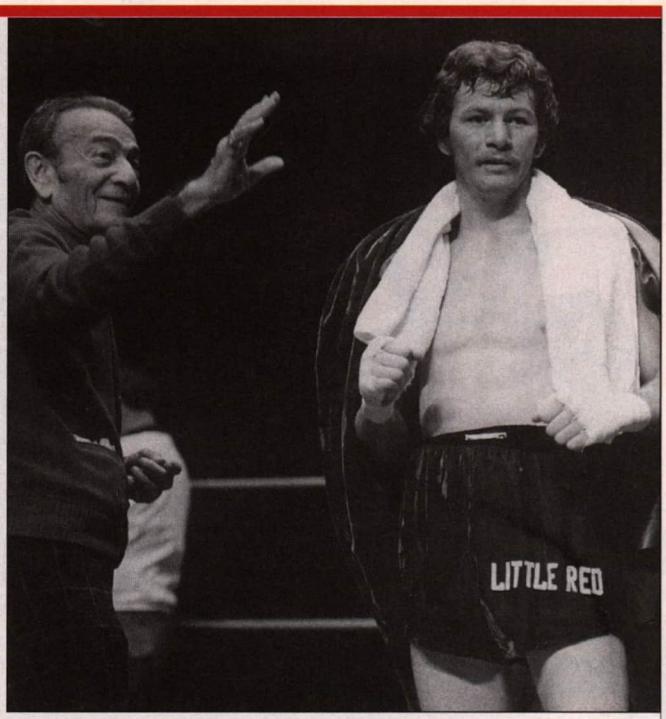
In his sixth pro fight, Lopez hammered Rafael "Polo" Lopez (no relation) into a fifth-round kayo defeat at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles. All told, "Little Red" fought 25 of his 42 pro bouts at the legendary venue.



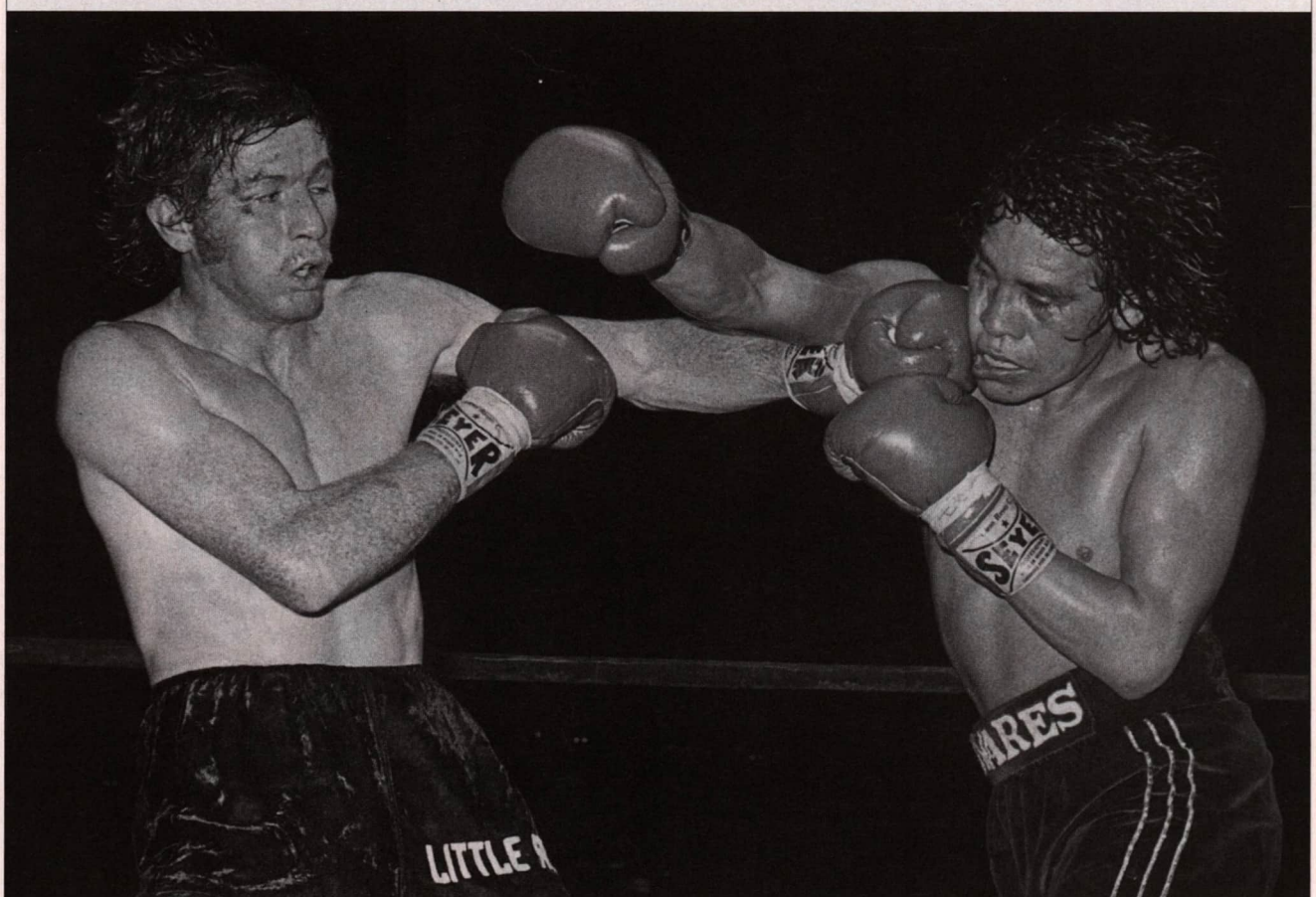
Lopez poses aboard a motorcycle in June 1972. By then, he was already a very popular attraction in the Los Angeles area.



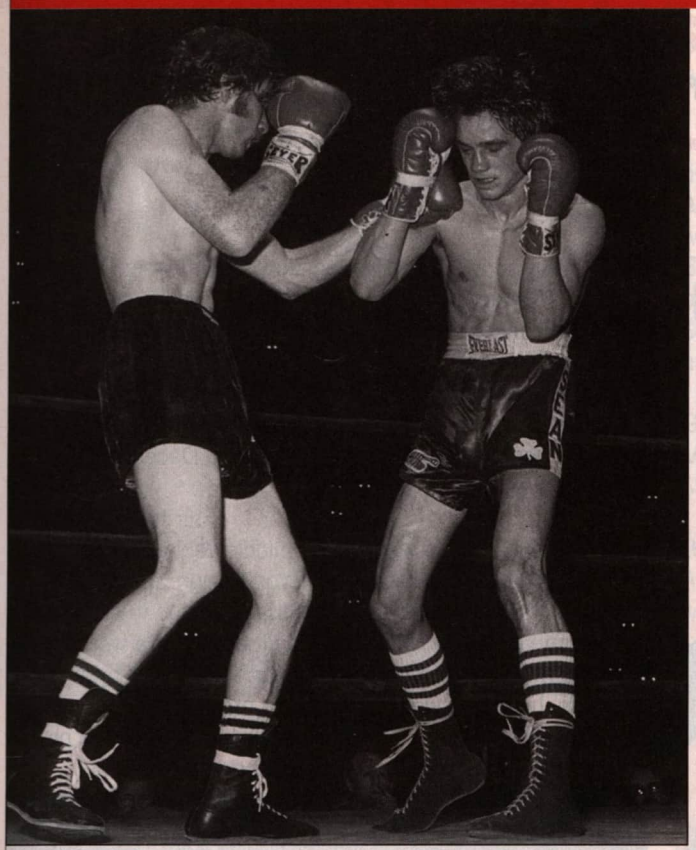
Jorge Reyes is on the receiving end of one of Lopez' right uppercuts during their October 1972 fight, which ended in a seventh-round knockout victory for Little Red. It was his 15th consecutive win via kayo.



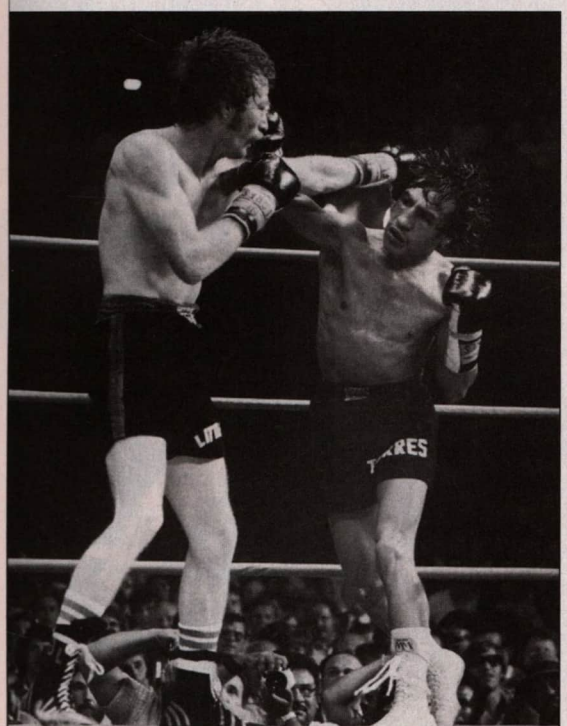
Lopez and trainer Howie Steindler enjoy the moment immediately following Danny's second-round TKO of Chucho Castillo in April 1974. Steindler, proprietor of the famous Main Street Gym in Los Angeles, trained both Lopez brothers until he was murdered in '77.



Even though future Hall of Famer Ruben Olivares was past his prime, his 1975 bout with Lopez was a huge attraction. Olivares floored Lopez in the first, but Danny beat the count and knocked out Olivares in the second round.



In his next fight after kayoing Olivares, Lopez stopped Sean O'Grady in the fourth round at the Inglewood Forum. Like most fighters, Lopez faced some easy touches from time to time, but his overall record is studded with outstanding fighters.

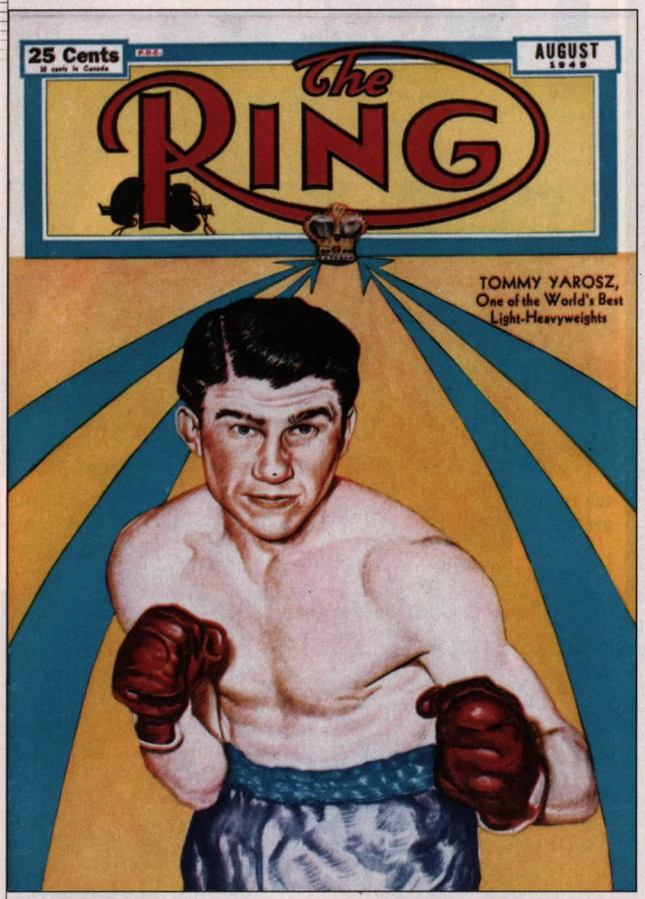


Lopez trades punches with Jose Torres during his first defense of the WBC featherweight belt, in September '77, that ended in another knockout win for Little Red. Seven more successful defenses would follow before Lopez lost the title in 1980.

PHOTO BY BRENT COOK

Lopez shows off his championship belts in 1991 shortly before his ill-advised comeback, which only lasted one fight.

August 1949



COVER STORY: "Tommy Yarosz, One Of The World's Best Light Heavyweights" is the cover headline, but as happened with bewildering frequency during this era, there is no story about Yarosz in the issue. So why is he on the cover?

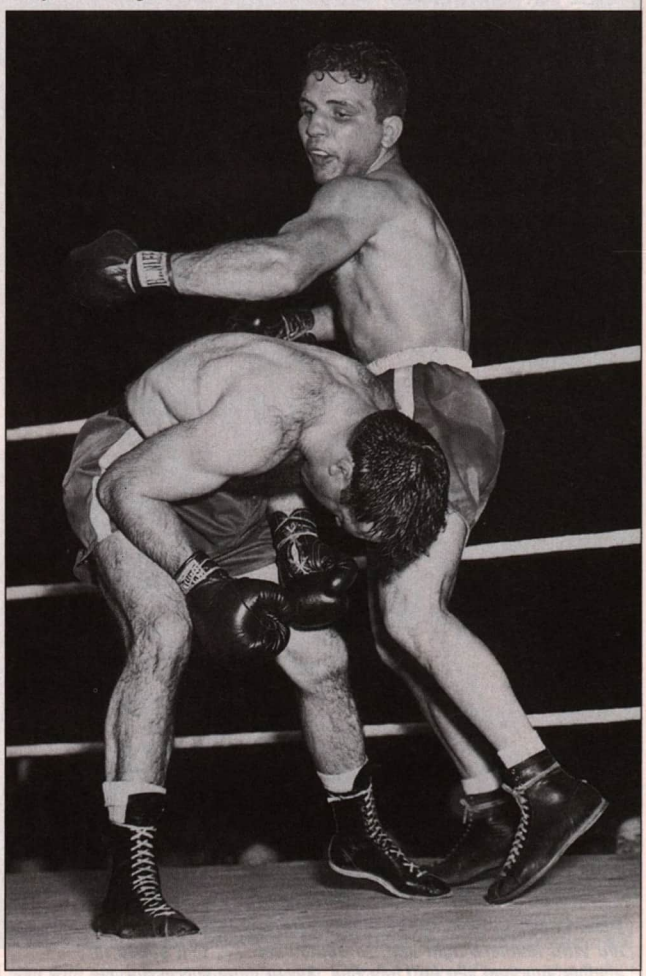
World Champions

(for the period ended June 16, 1949)

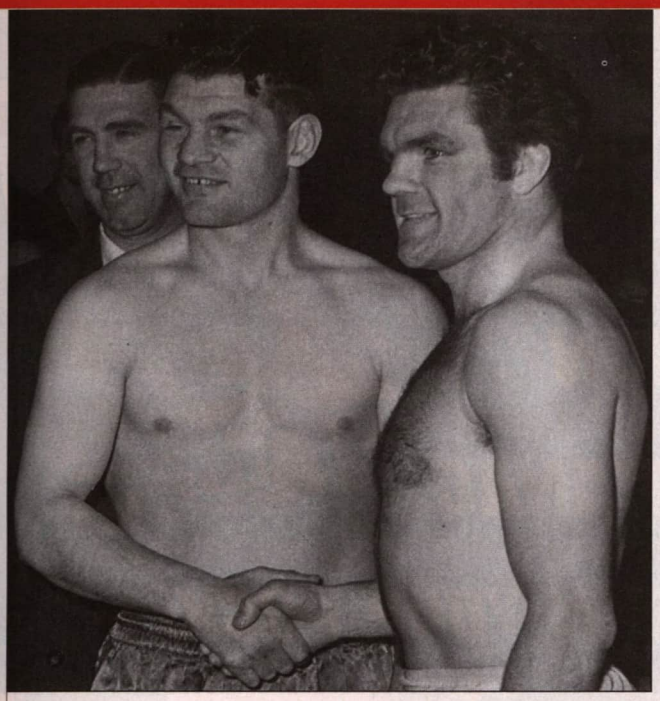
Heavyweight: vacant
Light Heavyweight: Freddie Mills
Middleweight: Jake LaMotta
Welterweight: Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Rinty Monaghan

The only semi-rational explanation is that Yarosz lost a controversial 10-round decision to Jake LaMotta in December 1948 and then went on a seven-bout winning streak. But by June 16 (the cutoff point for this issue's ratings), Bobo Olson had already ended Yarosz' streak. After the points loss to Olson, Yarosz only won five of his next 10 bouts and retired following a disqualification defeat to Randy Turpin in December 1950.

"Title Regained By U.S." is Nat Fleischer's take on Jake LaMotta winning the middleweight championship from Frenchman Marcel Cerdan. Even though Cerdan's corner pulled him out at the end of the 10th-round due to an injury to his left shoulder, Fleischer believes that LaMotta would have won regardless: "Had [Cerdan] not been stopped by his own seconds, he surely would have been prey for a full count and a continued battering … Even with Cerdan 100 percent physically fit throughout the bout, he was doomed to defeat."



LaMotta en route to stopping Cerdan



Woodcock (left) and Mills shake hands at the weigh-in

"Bruce Back In Heavyweight Spotlight" is Bruce Watson's coverage of Bruce Woodcock's 14th-round knockout of light heavyweight champion Freddie Mills in front of 46,000 fans at London's White City Stadium.

Heavyweight Woodcock enjoyed more than a 20-pound advantage over his foe and handed Mills a nasty beating to win the British Boxing Board of Control's recognition as heavyweight champion. Woodcock didn't stay in the spotlight long. He lost his next two bouts, to Lee Savold and Jack Gardner, and then retired.

"Maxim Cashing In On Decade's Effort" by Ted Carroll charts Joey Maxim's slow climb to the top and lauds his willingness to tangle with the best possible opposition, including Ezzard Charles, Jersey Joe Walcott, Jimmy Bivins, Lee Oma, and Curtis Sheppard. It was, however, Maxim's recent victory over Gus Lesnevich for the American light heavyweight championship that elevated him to the number-two position in THE RING's 175-pound ratings.

"All witnesses agree that his victory over Lesnevich was Maxim's most impressive showing," writes Carroll. "This was a good and exciting fight with the Clevelander a unanimous choice of the officials at the end of the match."

Carroll also explains that a match with reigning light heavyweight champion Freddie Mills was not the top priority of Maxim's manager, Jack "Doc" Kearns, writing that Kearns "makes no bones about admitting that his big objective is a chance at the ultimate survivor of the heavyweight fol-de-rol involving Charles, Walcott, [Lee] Savold, etc."

As it turned out, Maxim did fight Mills, winning the world light heavyweight championship in January 1950. But instead of defending the title, Maxim won seven straight heavyweight fights and finally challenged Charles in 1951, losing a 15-round decision. Maxim then returned to the 175-pound division, where he still held the title.

"Promoters' Bugaboo" by Al Buck explores the risk taken when promoters give fighters guaranteed purses. According to Buck, the aforementioned Maxim-Lesnevich bout was a perfect example of what can go wrong. Promoter Sam Becker guaranteed Lesnevich $50,000 and Maxim $15,000, but the gate was only $56,751, which meant Becker was $8,249 in the red before paying taxes, the preliminary fighters, and the cost of the promotion.

Buck also invokes the infamous Jack Dempsey-Tom Gibbons fight in 1923, which bankrupted the city of Shelby, Montana, when mayor Jim Johnson guaranteed Dempsey $300,000, and the fight only grossed $201,487.

Another big loser was Mike Jacobs' 1937 Carnival of Champions featuring Barney Ross-Ceferino Garcia, Lou Ambers-Pedro Martinez, and Sixto Escobar-Harry Jeffra, which lost an estimated $90,000.

Buck concludes by writing: "The demands of some managers often are out of proportion to their fighters' worth, and more than one promoter has had to pay handsomely to learn his lesson."

"Bennett, Aborigine, Hits The Jackpot" by Johnny Salak hypes Australian bantamweight Elley Bennett following his sixth-round knockout of Cecil Schoonmaker in front of 13,500 fans in Sydney Stadium.

"Bennett has acquired an aggressive, bewildering, and unorthodox style of continually changing his stance and delivering punches from every conceivable angle in veritable whirlwind fashion," writes Salak.

The bubble burst in Bennett's next fight when he lost a decision to Harold Dade. Bennett fought on until 1954, twice holding the Australian featherweight title and compiling an overall record of 37-13-1 (33).

Australian bantamweight Bennett

"Boxing In Lima, Peru" by local correspondent Prof. Wilfred Stephenson covers the defeat of local middleweight hero Antonio Frontado, who was knocked out by Carlos Perez in front of 15,000 at the Plaza de Toros de Acho. Perez, from the Dominican Republic, floored Frontado six times before the fight was stopped in the third round. They fought again two months later, when Frontado avenged his loss with a 10-round decision victory. ■

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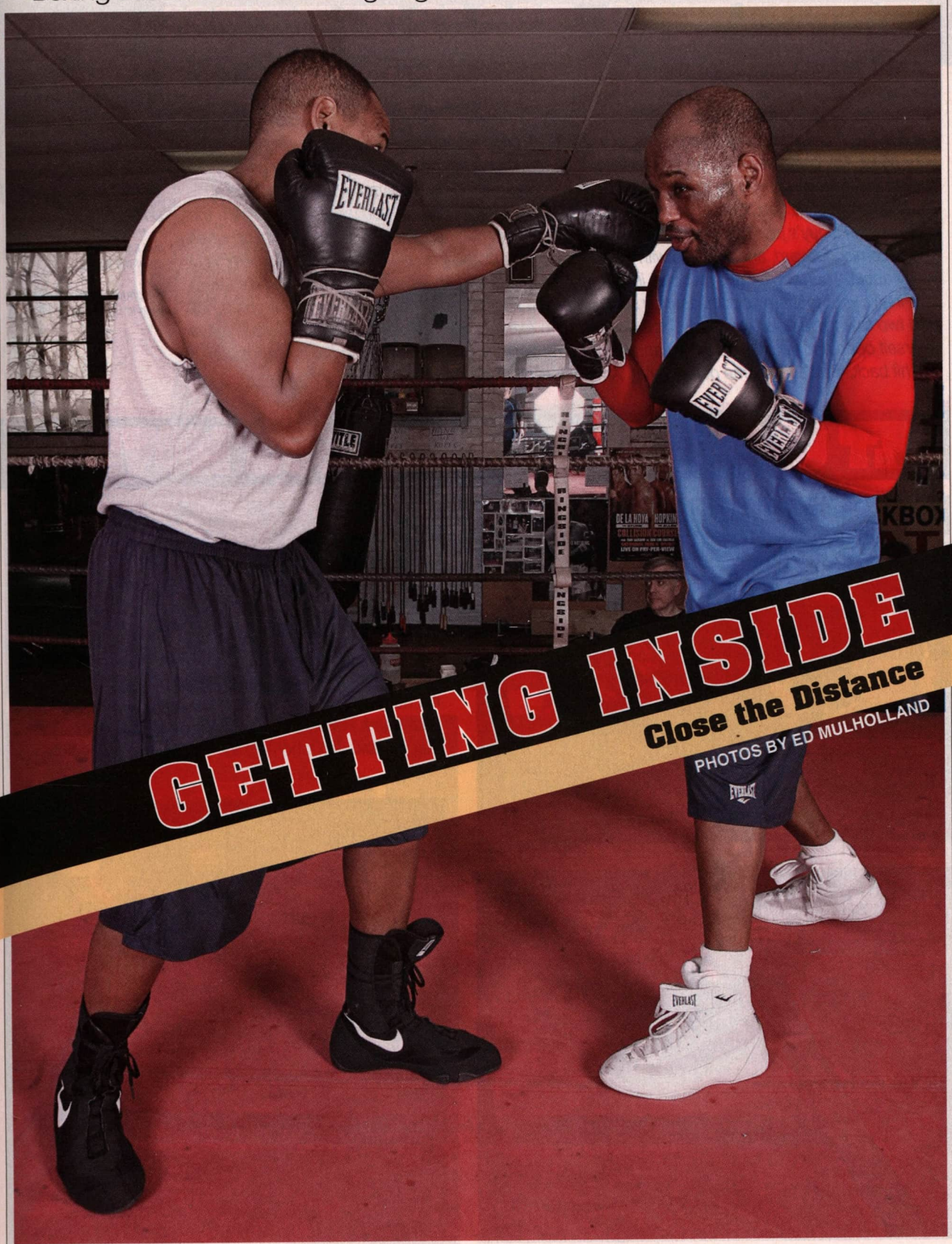
Perfect Execution

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



GETTING INSIDE

Close the Distance

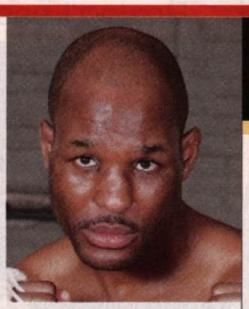
PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

If you're a shorter fighter or you just like to fight inside, you need two things: head movement and a jab. If you want to be an inside fighter or you're facing a tall, rangy guy, you're in bad shape if you don't have those things. Without good head movement and a jab, you're going to be stuck on the outside all night while your opponent jabs you to death.

The most important thing to do to get inside is move your head. To get inside, you must move your head from left to right to keep it from being in a stationary spot. So you have to come forward and move your head. Any good inside fighter you've ever seen moved his head so he could get in range and not get hit on the way in. If you try to just walk in with your head a stationary target, you'll get nowhere.

Also, to offset his jab, if he's throwing a jab while you're getting inside, you jab yourself. That's the way to offset a guy's jab. That's how you take it away. You jab with him. So, one: Move your head when you're coming forward, and two: Jab with the guy; take the jab away from him to give him something to worry about. Then you'll work your way inside. And then you're at an advantage, not a disadvantage.

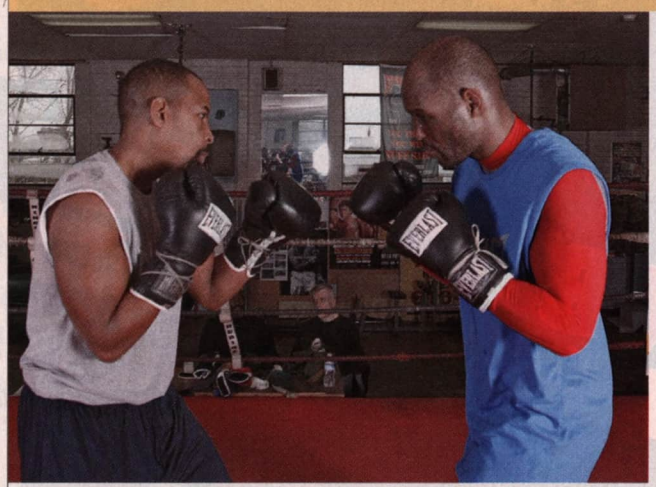
Finally, your feet are your measuring stick. You must know the distance between a foot-and-a-half and two feet to be able to execute. You don't want to execute from too far out, because you'll leave yourself open and you'll be reaching and lunging. You want to be able to hit and not be in position to get hit back. That's the name of the game. Arnold Joseph and I show you how.



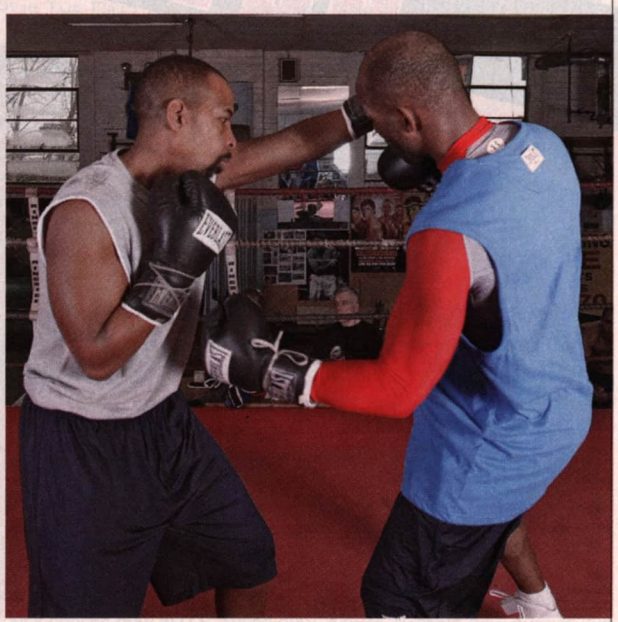
BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)

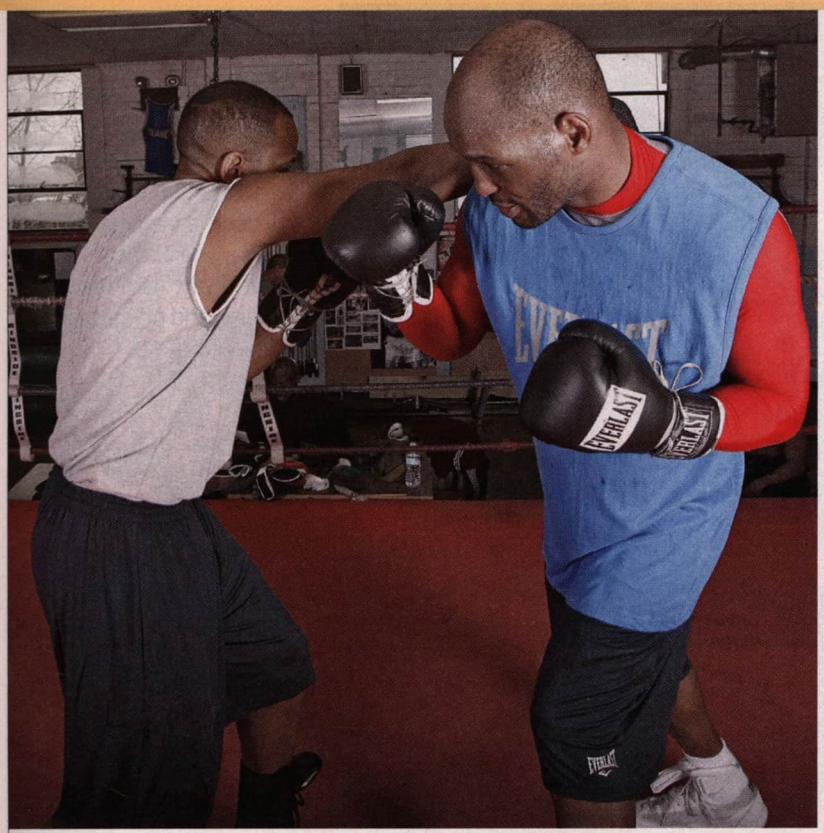
GET CLOSE AND MAKE YOUR MOVE



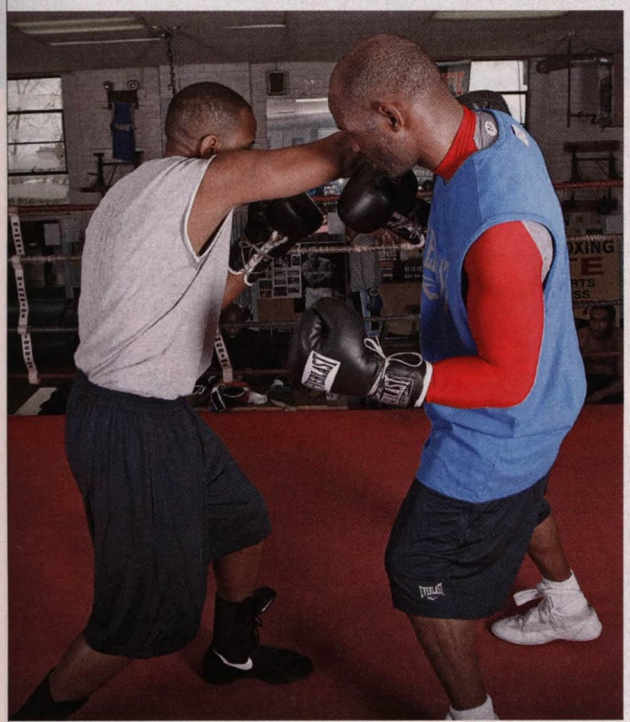
GET CLOSE TO YOUR OPPONENT SO THAT YOU'RE READY WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY COMES. It's good to feint him here and make him throw a punch that you can counter. A good feint will open him right up, and there's your opening. But it's no good unless you're close enough and you move your head. Here I'm at the perfect distance to slip the jab, step in, and drill a hook to the body.

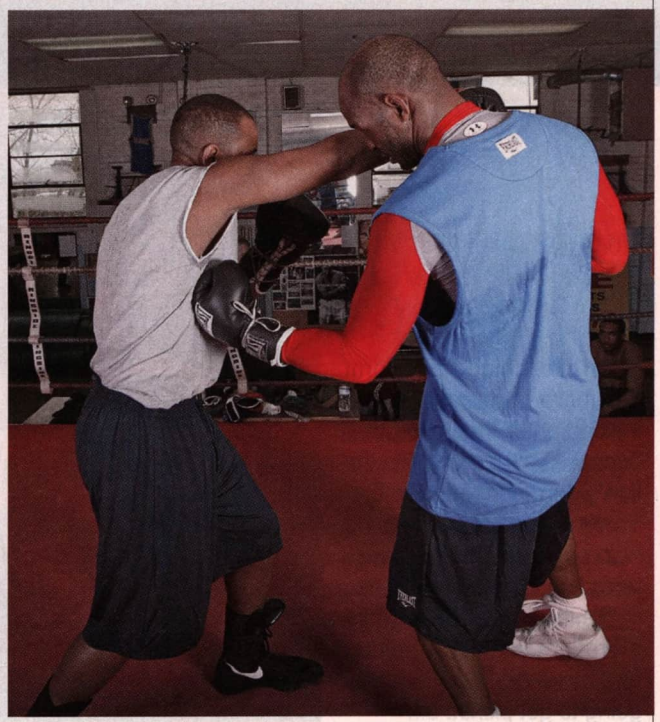


ONCE YOU'RE IN CLOSE, STAY THERE!



TOO MANY GUYS WORK HARD TO GET INSIDE, AND THEN, ONCE THEY'RE THERE, they throw a punch or two then let themselves get tied up. Or they stop punching and let the guy escape. Once you're where you want to be, you've got to work. Get those hands going, work your combinations, and push him back. You've got to do the work to do the damage.





THE WRONG WAY: STARTING FROM TOO FAR AWAY

REMEMBER, I SAID IN THE BEGINNING THAT YOUR FEET ARE YOUR MEASURING STICK and you must know your distance before you make your move. Here's why: I'm throwing that same hook to the body. But I've misjudged the distance and I'm too far away. As a result, I'm lunging and off-balance and an easy target.

REMEMBER YOUR FORM

WHAT'S WRONG HERE? WHAT *ISN'T* WRONG? My head is too far out over my feet, my chin is up, and my hands are down. Technique and form are more important for the inside fighter than any other because he's walking into the lion's den, right into the fire. That's where his game is. So he'd better be sure he's protected on the way in. Walking in like this is like walking into a firefight without a helmet and bullet-proof vest. You're going to get picked off.

DON'T FORGET TO JAB

YOUR INSTINCT WILL TELL YOU TO RUN IN WINGING BIG SHOTS OR TO LUNGE. DON'T DO IT. That's how they do it on the street. You want to walk in moving your head behind the jab. When you jab, you're taking away his jab, plus you're distracting him. He's worried about blocking and slipping the jab, and before he knows it, you're up in his chest and face bringing hooks and right hands. The jab is the key that unlocks the door. Double it. Triple the jab on the way in to get you close if you have to and then go to work.

By Michael Rivest
PHOTOS BY MIGUEL OLIVER

Super Athlete Tina Cruz

Angelo Dundee strongly believes that great athletes from other sports need to stay the hell out of the ring. "It calls for a special kind of balance, a feeling in there," he said. "It's almost impossible to make the transition."

He went on to provide a laundry list of comical examples, stories of graceful athletes with god-like reflexes who were made to look ridiculous when they exchanged one type of glove for two taped over hands.

"It's a hard rule," Dundee said.

Angelo, I'd like you to meet Christina Cruz from the Hell's Kitchen section of Manhattan. She'll shoot the jumper over your head and then change jerseys and knock the ball into a different area code. But at 23-years old, she gloved up.

"The first time I hit a heavy bag, I was hooked," Cruz said. "I fell in love with it. I could feel so much stress coming out."

Now, a mere four years later, Cruz is the number-one ranked 119-pound amateur woman boxer in the country and one of USA's best shots for Olympic Gold.

On the court or on the diamond, she was a star, but in the ring she's a force of nature. Within a year of walking into a gym, Cruz was the New York Empire State Games (ESG) and the New York City Golden Gloves champion. A year later, she defended those crowns and added a U.S. National Championship and the Pan-American Games.

Cruz proves graceful athletes can fight

Then Cruz started to get the hang of it. So add four more national titles to her record since then, along with, well, let's just say she wins everything and move on to other things.

Harmon Unger, now the NYC Public Schools Deputy CEO for Safety, remembers the pre-boxing Christina, the 15-year-old "quiet and shy" kid at NYC's Bayard Rustin School where he was athletic director at the time.

The mention of the name Christina Cruz to Unger was followed by a long pause as he struggled, not to retrieve the memory of a vaguely familiar name from the distant past, but for the right words to convey the unforgettable.

"She was the most naturally gifted athlete I've ever seen," he said. "She'd stop on a dime and change direction and had that sixth sense to always be in the right place at the right time."

Childhood friend Irving Gonzalez remembers playing Little League with Tina in New York's Central Park. "She was the only girl in the whole league and was the best player—by a lot," said Gonzalez. "Crowds started coming to the games just to see her. She was amazing. Did she tell you she was the team captain on the boys' high school baseball team?"

Uh, no, she didn't.

"Figures," Gonzalez said, "She never did like to brag."

"Christina was utterly fearless and couldn't be intimidated," said Unger, "whether it was by a bigger player in basketball or a powerful hitter to whom she was pitching. There was something inside of her, a core toughness she seemed to draw from."

"Sports always brought something out in me," Cruz said, "something that's inside all the time but has no other way out. It's always been that way."

2010 National Golden Gloves Championship Finals

May 3-8, 2010, Little Rock, Arkansas

108 pounds: Louie Byrd, Denver, CO, dec. Santos Vasquez, Sun Valley, NV

114 pounds: Rau'shee Warren, Cincinnati, OH, dec. Gary Antonio Russell, Capitol Heights, MD

123 pounds: Toka Kahn-Clary, Providence, RI, dec. James Smith, Detroit, MI

132 pounds: Erick Deleon, Lincoln Park, MI, dec. Damon Allen, Philadelphia, PA

141 pounds: Gary Allen Russell III, Capitol Heights, MD, dec. Mohamed Adam, Dearborn, MI

152 pounds: David Grayton, Washington D.C. dec. Errol Spence, Desoto, TX

165 pounds: Ronald Ellis, Lynn, MA, dec. Terrell Gausha, Cleveland, OH

178 pounds: Robert Brant, Oakdale, MN, dec. Khalib Whitmore, Philadelphia, PA

201 pounds: Steve Geffrard, Boca Raton, FL, dec. Jordan Shimmell, Hudsonville, MI

201+ pounds: Roberto Morban, Bronx, NY, dec. Lenroy Thompson, Lenexa, KS

While the story of the kid with a troubled home life finding release in sports, particularly boxing, is a tired stereotype, it's true in Cruz' case.

"Christina had it tough as a kid," said lifelong family friend Lucky Troche. "Her mom and dad had some struggles. I'm the one who insisted on taking her to a boxing gym four years ago. I thought the release would do her good."

"Lucky literally took me by the arm and forced me to go," added Cruz, laughing.

"My parents had bad habits and I was on the streets a lot of the time," said Cruz, acknowledging that drugs were involved. These days, however, she wants to protect her mom and dad from the embarrassment of old mistakes they have since fixed. "They're my biggest fans now."

Trainer Marcos Suarez has been working with Cruz for nearly three years. "She's one of those kind of fighters who comes along rarely that just does everything right," he said. "And when you do tell her something, she gets it right away, not like it's something new that makes sense, but like it's something she knew all along, inside of herself and just needed to be reminded.

"But unlike a lot of gifted athletes, she works very hard for what she has and doesn't make the mistake of relying on natural ability. She knows that victories are won in the gym."

The gym is where you'll find Cruz when she's not at her Manhattan secretarial job.

"When I'm not working, I'm training," she said. "It's as simple as that."

Christina Cruz: Remember the name.

The Man Behind The Woman

Marcos Suarez remembers first seeing Christina Cruz in the ring.

"I had never seen anyone with such natural ability as a boxer, the way she moved, her ability with both hands, everything."

Suarez was no newcomer to the fight game. As a former kick boxer, he knew something about using every resource available to you.

"Christina spent too much time going for the head, so one of the first things we worked on was broadening her target to include the body, that, and defense."

Before coming to the U.S. in 1986, Suarez was Puerto Rico's 147-pound national kickboxing champion for two consecutive years (1985, '86). "I only came to follow my coach who had moved here, but since there wasn't enough kickboxing going on in the U.S. at the time, I switched to boxing."

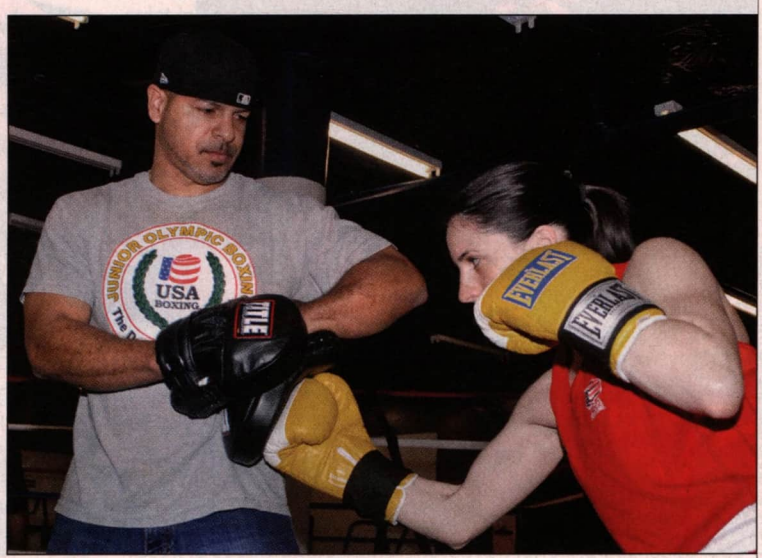
Suarez found quick success winning a few regional Golden Gloves championships and making it all the way to the national quarterfinals in 1991 before turning his attention to his true gift and greatest pride: training other fighters.

He has produced six nationally ranked amateurs, two of whom are now pursuing successful professional careers under his watchful eye: Stephen Martinez, 4-0 (4) and his son, Raul Lopez 3-1 (3).

Typically, a trainer's work is done in the gym. During the fight itself, his voice is most often white noise, drowned out by the crowd or simply unheeded by the fighter whose riveted attention is on the business at hand. But this is not the case with the Suarez-Cruz team.

"When I'm out there, I listen for Marcos' voice, and it's strange," Cruz said, "because I can always find it, no matter the noise level, even in Madison Square Garden. I throw whatever he says to throw. There's a trust in him I don't have in anyone else. He's done so much for me, I can't begin to tell you." ■

Michael Rivest can be reached at mrivest2@gmail.com



Suarez and Cruz work the pads

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Nosebleeds And Legal Cheating

In 2001, when Manny Pacquiao stopped Lehlohonolo Ledwaba in round six of Pacquiao's first fight in the United States, it was not because of his athletic prowess alone. Ledwaba, favored to retain the IBF super bantamweight belt, developed a severe nosebleed in round two. I was the chief physician that night and marveled that his cutman never once stopped the bleeding. Instead, Ledwaba huffed and puffed until he could no longer mount an offense. I have witnessed countless bouts with nosebleeds, but never one that so definitively altered the course of a fight and a fighter's career.

As fight fans know, most nosebleeds (epistaxis) are not serious. They are categorized based on whether they emanate from the anterior (front) or posterior (back) of the nose. The former makes up 90 percent of all nosebleeds and are usually easy to control. The latter are often from injury to an artery and require a specialist. Bleeding typically occurs from one nostril, although if severe, it can overflow into the nasopharynx (the area where the two nostrils converge) and blood can come into the other nostril. If blood drops into the back of the throat, someone can spit up or vomit blood.

Besides contributing to shortness of breath from less oxygen, excessive bleeding from a nosebleed can cause dizziness, fainting, weakness, or confusion.

Epinephrine (Adrenalin) is every cutman's friend to treat a nosebleed or cut. When topically applied to the bleeding area, it can take effect within one to two minutes, with its effects lasting five to 10 minutes. Unfortunately, many so-called experts know less about stopping a nosebleed than the viewing public.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Lenny DeJesus prepares to administer the Q-tip treatment to Clottey

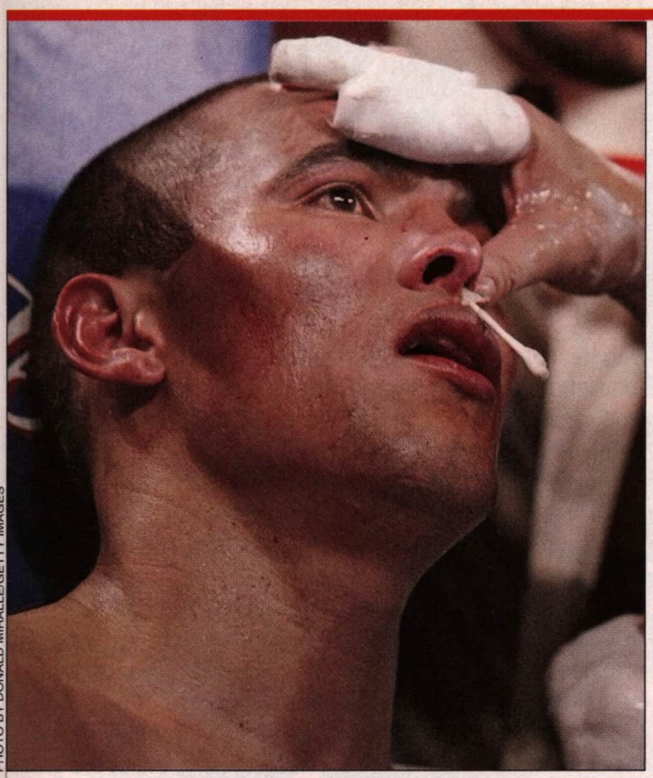


PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Direct pressure and epinephrine usually do the job

Respected cutman Danny Milano has worked with Paulie Malignaggi, Andre Berto, Antonio Tarver, and Arturo Gatti. He agrees that few cutmen understand their craft. Too often they use an epinephrine-soaked Q-tip as a weapon by placing it too deep up a fighter's nose to do any good.

"I don't put the Q-tip too far up the nose," said Milano. "Then I apply pressure with ice on the bridge of the nose. You need to understand there are repercussions in doing something the wrong way."

Epinephrine will stop a cut or nosebleed if applied correctly. Frequently, cutmen jab Q-tips far enough up the nose they could perform a lobotomy! Others don't use direct pressure, which seriously diminishes epinephrine's effects.

When Pacquiao went 12 rounds with Joshua Clottey on March 13, Clottey did just enough to survive every round. By the sixth round, Clottey was dragging his feet. He had no nosebleed to speak of, but his cutman, Lenny DeJesus, aggressively placed Q-tips up Clottey's nose, each time instructing his fighter to breathe deeply.

I wouldn't have given this a second look—that is, until former BALCO (Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative) owner Victor Conte contacted me and suggested that epinephrine-soaked Q-tips were being illegally administered in boxing as stimulants or performance enhancers. Few, if anyone, can compete with Conte's expertise on performance enhancing drugs. Sure enough, watching the replay you could see Clottey full of energy after deeply inhaling during the one-minute rest periods between rounds six through 12.

"I have given epinephrine to many athletes—including world class sprinters like Tim Montgomery," noted Conte. "I had Montgomery use Primatene Mist (aerosol epinephrine for inhalation) as a PED before he won the U.S. sprint title at 100 meters in 9.95 seconds at the U.S. Track and Field Championships on June 23, 2001, held in Eugene, Oregon. It can significantly improve exertion and reaction time, increase oxygen uptake (facilitating increased air flow and opening air passages), and stimulate the central nervous system—part of the fight-or-flight response."

I am not insinuating that Clottey's cutman was deliberately using epinephrine in an illegal fashion, rather that its use can have highly desirable but potentially dangerous side effects. Topical epinephrine side effects include low potassium, heart arrhythmias, high blood pressure with increased risk of heart attack or stroke, muscle weakness, and dizziness.

Trainer and former WBA light heavyweight titleholder Eddie Mustafa Muhammad admitted that too often no one really understands what is going on in the corner between rounds.

"I have seen a fighter jump up and act like it was round one instead of round 12 after getting a Q-tip in their nose," said Muhammad. "Clottey was in survival mode; he needed the energy to run."

From a medical standpoint, in order to properly administer epinephrine to stop a nosebleed, the last thing a cutman would ever tell a fighter is to inhale. First, the epinephrine can only stop the bleeding if applied directly to the bleeding vessels in the nostril; if inhaled, it would be ineffective as a coagulant. Secondly, if the cutman thought his fighter had a nasal fracture, they would never say "inhale" as that would contribute to facial and eye socket swelling and impair vision.

Given that illegal use of epinephrine during a fight can happen, how do regulators control this unfair act? Just because a substance isn't listed as a prohibited drug or is on a drug screen, doesn't mean it is not illegal.

"Epinephrine is an endogenous [naturally occurring] hormone like growth hormone," said Conte. "So it would be very difficult to develop a test differentiating exogenous [administered] from endogenous production." These same obstacles exist in testing for human growth hormone.

Topically applied epinephrine remains the best substance available to stop a nosebleed during a fight. It just needs to be used properly and in a legal fashion. Inspectors, commission-employed monitors in the corners and dressing rooms, must closely observe how Q-tips are applied and when. Furthermore, trainers and cutmen should be required to pass training regarding allowable and proper administration of epinephrine.

◆◆◆

Although the Floyd Mayweather-Shane Mosley fight wasn't a classic bout, it changed the sport forever in a positive way due to Mayweather's insistence on Olympic-style blood testing and Mosley agreeing to cooperate. Commissions, the Association of Boxing Commissions, and sanctioning organizations need to drop the excuses and begin working with the United States Anti-Doping Agency and the World Anti-Doping Agency. Yes, it is costly, but feasible. Moreover, ignoring this issue lessens the commission's credibility. ■

By Jim Bagg

Do That To Me Juan More Time

There's a big difference between "want" and "need." The Baggomatic *wants* to drink a half-dozen Heinekens before bed each night. He *needs*, for survival purposes, to simply have uncontaminated water available in his apartment. He *wants* to wake up beside a *Baywatch* beauty. He *needs* ... well, just about anything with a pulse will do. (Heck, something inflatable might even make the cut.) He *wants* every fight to be Basilio vs. DeMarco. He *needs* every fight to *not* be Ruiz vs. Oquendo.

When the Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz rematch was formally announced, there was a fair amount of talk from the boxing press about how we don't "need" this fight. It's not the most meaningful fight that can be made, they said. Both guys are coming off losses, they said. This rematch is just not necessary, they said. Then they all headed straight for the free buffet in the press room, spilled sauce from the chicken parm on their shirts, and scurried off to press row just in time for the main event so they could all file different versions of the exact same story with the exact same quotes. (And yes, the Baggtastic pokes fun, but he too leaps out of his seat for free food and spills it on himself; the difference is he has more writing talent in one cottage-cheesy butt cheek than the rest of the other boxing writers have put together.)

Anyway, back to Marquez-Diaz II. No, we don't *need* it. But since when is making a fight we *want* such a bad thing? If this fight is unnecessary, then let's just call it the best unnecessary fight in all of boxing.

Look, the Baggasaurus understands the criticism. We saw a clear winner the first time, so there's no controversy that needs to be cleared up with a rematch. Diaz seems to be going downhill in a hurry at just 26 years of age, with a 2-3 record in his last five fights that would probably be 1-4 if the first Paulie Malignaggi fight hadn't been held in the great state that gave us George W. Bush, Ross Perot, Tommy Tune, and ZZ Top. Marquez is coming off the worst loss of his career, a defeat to Floyd Mayweather in which he was about as competitive as Kate Moss in a hot dog eating contest. Neither guy is really building toward anything big with

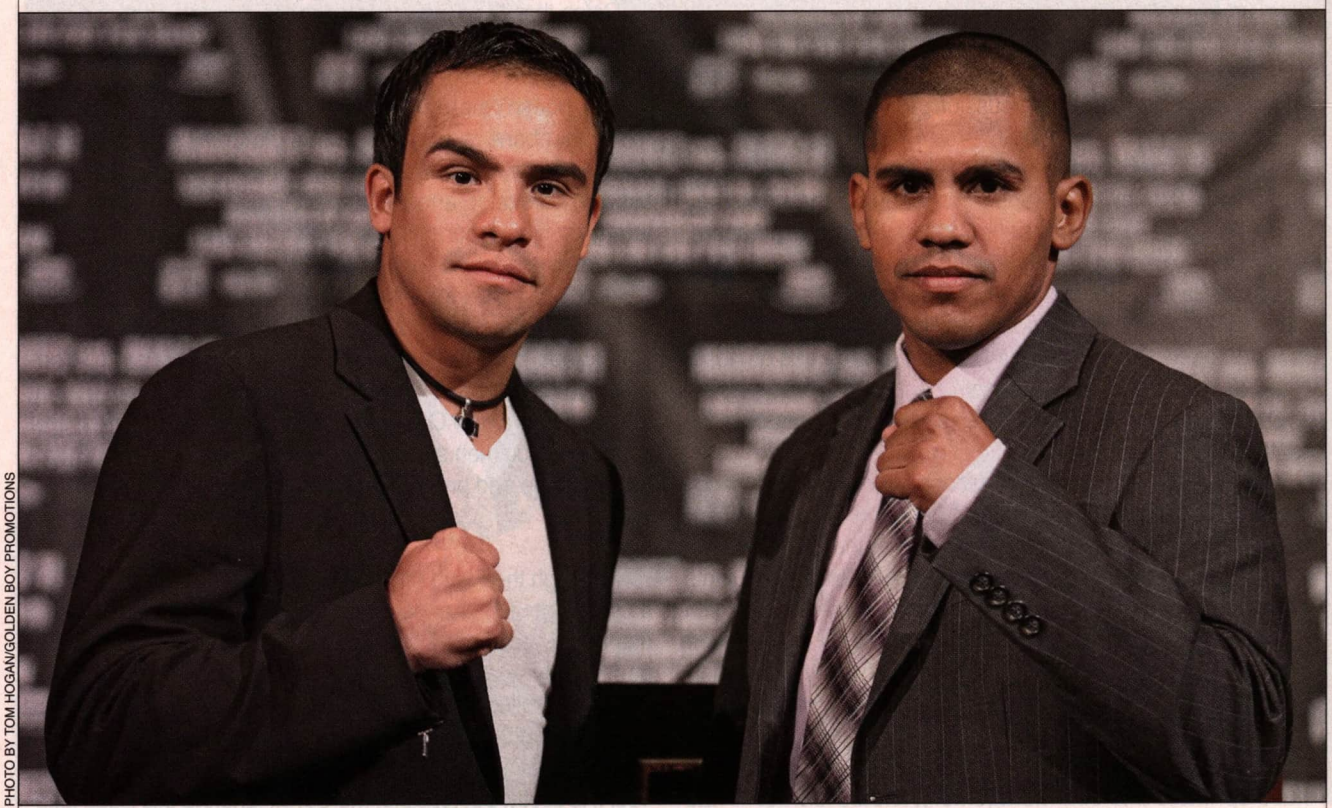


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

What's wrong with a rematch of last year's Fight of the Year?

The first fight was even on the scorecards when Marquez flattened Diaz

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

a win in this rematch. They're both just hoping to win and remain relevant.

But that last fact, the very fact that makes this fight not especially meaningful to some observers, is precisely what makes it so potentially fun. Neither Marquez nor Diaz can afford a loss right now. Their backs are against the wall. If Diaz loses, it's bye-bye boxing, hello summer internship fetching coffee for the district attorney. If Marquez loses, it's bye-bye boxing, hello urine-drinking fetish porn.

And there are several other reasons to be excited for this fight. How about the fact that Marquez-Diaz I was the friggin' Fight of the Year in 2009?! In the old days, back when Sir Baggalot was bouncing on his grandpappy's knee and a "speakeasy" was a place you went to drink rather than a word for something Emanuel Steward couldn't do, if two pugs made a great fight the first time around, they did it again, no questions asked. After Tony Zale beat Rocky Graziano the first time, you didn't hear anyone say, "Eh, Zale knocked him out cleanly, no sense doing it again." They said, "Bring on the rematch," and thank goodness, because the second one was every bit as classic as the first. Not to compare Marquez-Diaz to Zale-Graziano, but how quickly people forget that for the first six rounds or so Diaz was in control and that the kayo came with the fight even on the cards.

And since when is it a bad thing if both fighters have slipped a bit since the first time around? Unless you're Bernard Hopkins, the older you get, the easier you become to hit. And the easier you are to hit, the more fun it is (maybe not for you, but for everybody watching). Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier were both better fighters in '71 than they were in '75. But the Thrilla in Manila was the best fight of their trilogy because they weren't bobbing, weaving, ducking, slipping, and parrying as well as they did four years earlier. Marquez-Diaz II has the potential to feature higher connect rates than the first time, and last time the Baggdelion checked, we don't shell out big bucks for ringside seats to watch guys swing and miss.

Oh, and for those who claim the fight is meaningless, let the Baggnoplasty remind you that this is a RING championship fight, as it was the first time. Marquez is still the lightweight champ. If Diaz wins, he claims the lineal title and completely changes the way his career is viewed. If Marquez wins, he's still the king of the division and is still a top five pound-for-pounder. Sure, because of both guys' negative momentum, the fight means a little less than last time. But it still means a helluva lot.

There's nothing wrong with being more excited for Manny Pacquiao vs. Floyd Mayweather or Tomasz Adamek vs. David Haye. But you still ought to be fired up for Marquez-Diaz II if you want to continue calling yourself a fight fan. Pay-per-views aren't cheap, the Baggadactyl understands that, but this is one that should give fans their money's worth.

(Still, it wouldn't be the worst idea in the world for Golden Boy Promotions to try to put one or two halfway presentable fights on the undercard. The Baggmometer isn't sure if that qualifies as a "want" or a "need." All he knows is that the boxing fans deserve a PPV undercard without Cornelius Lock, Said Ouali, or any Chavez kids on it.)

The Monthly Mailbagg

This month, the Baggy-Tooty-Fresh-And-Fruity is running two reader e-mails: one that was brief and to the point and one that wasn't. Or, as the Baggmeister likes to think of them, one that was like going to the bathroom back in his younger days, and one that reflects the current state of his prostate:

Dear Count Baggula,

Which sucked more: Jones-Hopkins I or Jones-Hopkins II?

Thanks,
Aaron

Aaron,

Wow, great question—this is like Sophie's Choice in reverse. The Baggorade guesses he'd lean toward the first fight sucking more, because at least there were expectations that it might be decent. By the time the rematch rolled around 67 years later, there were no such illusions. We knew it would suck and it did suck. If anyone wanted to watch two middle-aged clowns overreacting to every little offense, that's what Tony Kornheiser and Mike Wilbon are for.

Baggdouche,

I am not quite sure what your level of influence is over at THE RING, but I was wondering if you could do all of us a favor. I am personally sick and tired of waiting for my next issue to arrive only to see that cross-eyed Manny Pacquiao on the cover making faces at me. Do not get me wrong, McBaggets, I am one who truly hopes Pacquiao wipes that ever-annoying smile off Mayweather's face. I just think THE RING should start putting different boxers on the cover. Israel Vasquez, Paulie Malignaggi, Victor Ortiz, Kendall Holt, etc. There are plenty of boxers worthy of that coveted cover picture. I would not even mind to see Chris Arreola's mug dogging me on the cover. So please, hook your readers up, maybe you can pull something out of your Bagg-o-tricks to stop this trend from continuing.

David Mata
Bakersfield, CA

Mata Of Opinion,

This trend of putting one fighter on the cover with great regularity is nothing new. When Mike Tyson was at the peak of his popularity, he was on four or five RING covers a year. Same with Oscar De La Hoya. If you go back to the '70s, it's hard to find a cover that Muhammad Ali *wasn't* on. The reality is that Pac-Man is the most bankable star in the sport right now, he's wildly popular all over the globe, and if you want to sell magazines, Pacquiao's mug is the one that will do it.

At the same time, you're right that it's good to get some new blood on the cover. A few months ago, the Baggabond's bosses stretched to put Tim Bradley on the front of the mag. But are you kidding with the boxers you're suggesting? Kendall Holt? The same Kendall Holt who got stopped by Kaizer Mabuza a few months ago? Chris Arreola? Jeez, shouldn't winning be a factor in becoming a cover boy? And if Nigel Collins puts Victor Ortiz on the cover at this phase of his career, the Golden Boy conspiracy theorists' heads will explode.

You want fewer Pacquiao covers? As long as he keeps winning, and as long as a potential fight with Mayweather remains the talk of the boxing world, you aren't getting your wish. But when THE RING is ready to stop selling mags and go into the toilet as a business, they'll gladly take your suggestions to turn losers and journeymen into cover subjects.

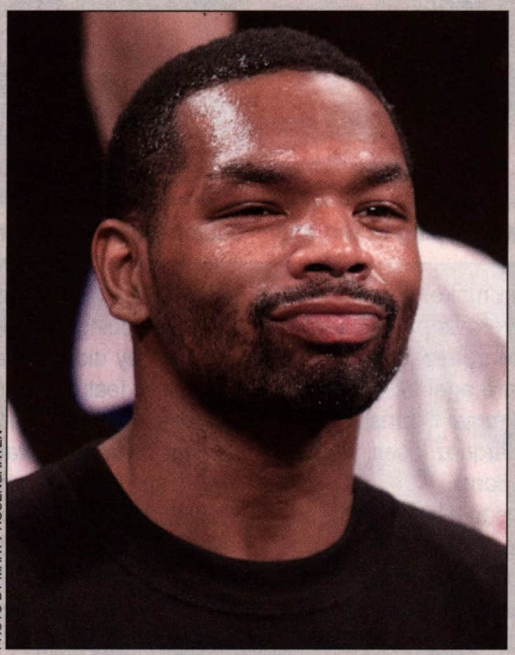


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Sorry, David, this is as close as Holt will ever get to the cover

In the end, this is a pay-per-view that won't be judged by its buy rate. It'll be judged by its satisfaction rate. And Marquez-Diaz II does rate to satisfy.

A Different Rematch Debate

The controversial ending to Paul Williams vs. Kermit Cintron has the boxing community discussing a potential rematch. And under normal circumstances, the Baggaquiddick would be on board, since their first bout was just heating up and turned into a classic case of fightus interruptus. But in this instance, Williams-Cintron II should be a Plan B.

Plan A, now that Kelly Pavlik has passed on his immediate rematch with Sergio Martinez, is Williams-Martinez II. Their first fight was outstanding. The decision was an "Anne Heche"—it could have gone either way. Martinez is now the RING middleweight champ, which makes the result of a rematch pretty damn important.

So if Williams-Martinez II can be made, that's the fight we demand to see. For one famous Kermit, it wasn't easy being green. For another, it's not easy being told to get back in line. But that's what happens when you can't resist the urge to dive onto ringside tables. Next time, Kermit, just fall on the canvas like a normal person.

Bagg wants Williams-Martinez II, not Williams-Cintron II

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

May The Best Eduardo Garcia Win

Never let it be said that matchmakers don't have a sense of humor. On May 8 in Mexico City, 122-pound fringe contender Eduardo Garcia needed an opponent for a 10-rounder, so he was matched with … Eduardo Garcia. Two boxers, same name, same size (give or take a weight class), and somebody thought it would be a good idea to put them in the ring together. Fortunately, one of the Eduardo Garcias (the one who ended up losing by 10th-round disqualification) has a nickname: "Bruce." Makes perfect sense: a Mexican guy named Eduardo Garcia who's known as Bruce. Then again, the Baggarific has been told that Bruce Seldon's buddies all called him "Eduardo," so go figure.

Anyway, it could have been worse: One of these guys could have been trained by Oxnard's Eduardo Garcia. Then things *really* would have gotten confusing.

And The Stingray Goes To …

A rare repeat Stingray winner, Darnell Boone, who stung again with a shocking second-round knockout of previously unbeaten Canadian prospect Adonis Stevenson in April. Boone entered the fight with a record of 16-15-2 (6). Stevenson came in at 13-0 (10). Is there any question what was supposed to happen? Certainly, Boone wasn't supposed to land a perfect punch just a few seconds into the second round to send Stevenson to the canvas.

Boone had lost five straight coming in, but this sort of straying-from-the-script behavior is nothing new for him. He's beaten a 4-0 fighter, a 7-0 fighter, and an 8-0 fighter, plus he held 13-0-1 Lajuan Simon to a draw in 2006. Just last year, it was Boone or bust for both 12-2 Louis Turner and 20-3-1 Calvin Green, who each lost to the Atlanta-based middleweight in a span of two months. Those back-to-back results earned Boone his first Stingray, in the September '09 issue. Now he's done it again.

It's a shame that Boone doesn't have a cool nickname like "Stingray," because if he did, the Baggical Mystery Tour would probably rename this award in his honor. But the "Boone Award" and the "Darnell Award" just don't have any ring to them. So it will remain the Stingray. And Boone will just remain the stinging-est stinger around. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

Two-time Stingray winner Boone even gave Andre Ward trouble

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

"Money" Matters

How can Floyd Mayweather call himself the best boxer ever when throughout his whole career he's dodged opponents who could potentially beat him? Mayweather only agrees to fight opponents who don't pose a threat to him. Beating household names like Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, and Juan Manuel Marquez when they are already past their primes doesn't prove anything. As a matter of fact, De La Hoya should get more credit for taking on all comers in their primes and losing to some of them than Mayweather should get for handpicking faded legends and beating them when they are already washed up. The trend of Mayweather ducking prime and young fighters continues today with Mayweather looking for a way out of fighting Manny Pacquiao. Moreover, I don't hear Mayweather calling out young contenders such as Andre Berto or Paul Williams. In closing, I just want to say Floyd should respect the boxers who have come before him, especially if he's not willing to take the same risks that they had taken. He

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Comments about Floyd Mayweather continue to dominate the topic of letters and emails sent to THE RING, and this month was no exception. Brian Laterra, Michael Putrino, Paul Fuccilo, and Charles Lamont Wynn Sr. all chipped in with their thoughts about "Money May."

can't call himself the best if he's not willing to fight the best.

PAUL FUCCILLO
labe11avita@aol.com

I will never again spend $55 on a Floyd Mayweather fight. The only thing less appealing than a Floyd fight is his personality, which appeals to the lowest common denominator of society. The only thing I can look forward to is when this shallow, soulless embarrassment to boxing is broke and owes the IRS millions. I hope he has set his children up with trust funds so they do not have to pay the price for their idiot father and his gangsta image. Floyd, you have bored me for the last time.

BRIAN LATERRA
laterra76@hotmail.com

I was quite disappointed to see that Floyd "Money" Mayweather did not make the cut in "Crowd Pleasers: The Ring Ranks Today's Top 10 Most Exciting Fighters" in the June 2010 issue. He did not even make the "honorable mention" list for that matter.

Mayweather is a true tactician, wearing his opponents down with his uncanny ability to land jabs and power punches accurately and virtually at will, while simultaneously evading pending danger. He truly defines the craft of boxing with his god-given talent and training discipline. Love him or hate him, Mayweather keeps fans in either camp on the edge of their seats, waiting in suspense to see if the master will continue to dominate his opponents or if someone will finally give him a reality check. I believe that Mayweather should be at the top of the "Crowd Pleaser" list.

MICHAEL PUTRINO
New Milford, NJ

Now that Manny Pacquiao has said that he is okay with giving a blood sample 14 days before the fight, there should be absolutely no reason why a Floyd Mayweather-Pacquiao fight does not materialize. Mayweather vs. Pacquiao is the biggest superfight in boxing and hopefully will go down as one of the all-time greatest fights. I believe Floyd will impressively beat Manny to cement his legacy as one of the greatest fighters of all-time.

CHARLES LAMONT WYNN SR.
Brooklyn, NY

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Trainer Freddie Roach congratulated Amir Khan following the Brit's TKO of Paul Malignaggi. Readers wonder how Roach can train the Golden Boy-promoted Khan when some within the promotional company are being sued for allegedly claiming that Manny Pacquiao, who Roach also trains, is on PEDs.

Lewis Lament

I read that Lennox Lewis will be leaving HBO. I'm sorry to see him go. Lennox has always been a class act, and since we won't see him in the ring anymore, I appreciated seeing him on HBO. I'm sure Lennox will do well in whatever he does, as he's always been one of boxing's smartest participants.

TROY MORRIS
Levittown PA

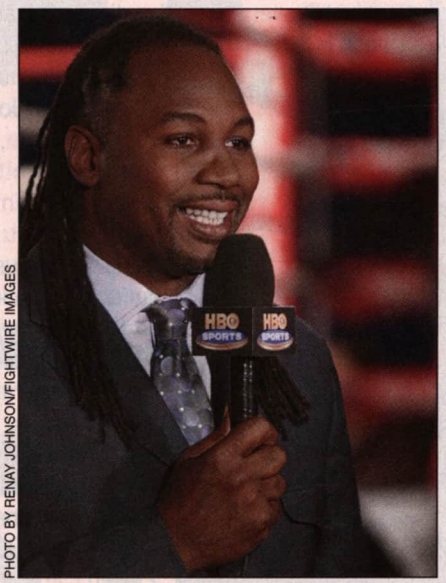


PHOTO BY RENAY JOHNSON/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Lennox Lewis has lost his job as part of HBO's* Boxing After Dark *broadcast team. Reader Troy Norris writes to say he enjoyed Lennox's commentary and will miss the former heavyweight champion.

Conflict Of Interest

How can Freddie Roach be okay with training Amir Khan for Golden Boy Promotions after they made accusations against Roach's number-one fighter, Manny Pacquiao? By accusing Pacquiao of using performance enhancing drugs, the folks at Golden Boy are saying that Roach is the trainer of a cheater. How can Freddie rationalize having a working relationship with GBP after all the controversy they've helped create?

SAM SMITH
Goldsboro, NC

Redheaded Sensation

Wow! This kid Saul "Canela" Alvarez is very good. He's got a wicked left hook and a strong straight right hand. All he needs is a little polish and he could be the next world champion from Mexico. I now see why Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. does not want to fight him.

JOSE ASTORGA
Grandview, MO ■

By Eric Raskin

JuanMa Hopes Not To Get Mtagwa'd Again

A mega-fight can take years to build up and just one punch to tear down. The grand plan, as we've been hearing for about a year now, is for undefeated featherweight phenoms **Juan Manuel Lopez** and **Yuriorkis Gamboa** to eventually square off for major money in a fight that reaches beyond just the hardcore fans. Some promoters would play it safe and take the sure thing by making the fight now for a modest profit. **Bob Arum** is in a gambling mood, leaving his money on the table for a couple more hands in hopes of doubling and quadrupling it.

That means build-up fights, and Lopez' next gamble comes in the form of **Bernabe Concepcion**, a game 22-year-old from the Philippines who, on paper, is neither a walkover nor a serious threat. That's precisely how **Rogers Mtagwa** was perceived before he fought Lopez last October, and we all know what almost happened there. So when Lopez steps into the ring with Concepcion on July 10 at Coliseo Jose Miguel Agrelot in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, is the big fight in danger of getting derailed?

Both Concepcion and Lopez have 28 wins on their records, whereas "JuanMa" has a beautiful zero on the end of his, Concepcion has three losses and a draw. It's not as ugly as it sounds, however. Two of Concepcion's losses came in his first 10 fights, one when he was 16 and the other when he was 17. Remember, fellow Filipino **Manny Pacquiao** also had a loss in his teens that nobody holds against him.

Concepcion's third defeat came last August against **Steven Luevano**, when he was disqualified for a late punch in a fight that was basically even on the cards through seven rounds. In his next fight, Concepcion bounced back with a career-best win, a one-sided (if shaky in the final round) unanimous decision over **Mario Santiago**.

In his most recent fight, Lopez absolutely annihilated Luevano, underlining his status as the favorite in this fight. But Concepcion could pose some problems, as, like Mtagwa, the Filipino likes to walk forward and rumble. Concepcion was, until recently, trained by **Freddie Roach**, which is certainly not a bad thing for a fighter's development. (Pacquiao assistant **Restituto "Buboy" Fernandez** has since taken over in the corner.) Also, Concepcion just defeated a southpaw in Santiago, which could prove helpful preparation for the lefty stance of Lopez.

"Concepcion is a strong puncher and will give me a tough fight," Lopez acknowledged at the press conference to announce the bout.

Concepcion showed his opponent the same respect. "I have to be very smart and careful with Lopez because he's a big puncher," the underdog said.

No matter how hard you try to focus on the positives with Concepcion, this is still intended to be a marking-time fight for Lopez. However, as marking-time fights go, this Showtime-televised showdown isn't bad. And because the Gamboa carrot is dangling, and we've seen Lopez flirt with disaster once before, there should be tension for as long as it lasts.

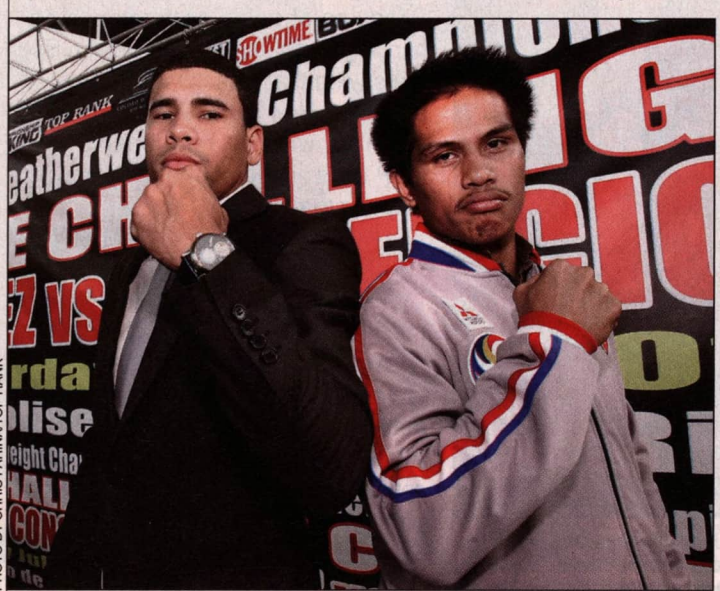


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Concepcion: Dangerous test for "JuanMa"

Listen Up

Showtime will lead into Lopez-Concepcion the night before with a solid *ShoBox* card from Atlantic City, headlined by the pay-cable debut of unbeaten Philadelphia welterweight **Mike Jones**. Jones takes on tough Puerto Rican veteran **Irving Garcia**, while another welterweight prospect, **Antwone Smith**, fights in the co-feature ... Top-rated junior welter **Timothy Bradley** was supposed to fight **Luis Carlos Abregu** on July 17. Then Abregu was out and the more dangerous **Marcos Maidana** was in. Then Maidana suffered a back injury, and now Abregu has been reinserted. HBO will televise ... **Chris John** will make the 13th defense of his featherweight alphabet belt on July 26 against Argentina's **Fernando Saucedo**. On the one hand, Saucedo hasn't lost in 23 fights. On the other hand, two of those fights were four-rounders and 15 of them were six-rounders. Also, of the 38 wins on Saucedo's record, only one came by stoppage ... Group Stage 3 of Showtime's "Super Six" tournament kicks off on August 21 with **Carl Froch** taking on **Arthur Abraham**. Abraham has three points and is almost assured a spot in the semi-finals no matter what; Froch has two points and probably needs at least a draw to advance. ■

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